LIBERTY BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

PROFESSIONAL SOCCER MINISTRIES: THE DECONSTRUCTION OF SECULARIZATION THROUGH THE GLOBALIZATION OF SOCCER IN CONJUNCTION WITH A BIBLICAL WORLDVIEW

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ABSTRACT

PROFESSIONAL SOCCER MINISTRIES:
THE DECONSTRUCTION OF SECULARIZATION THROUGH
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This project is an attempt to present the ministry of, conceptual/theological
impetus for, and assessment of Professional Soccer Ministries as it pertains to the
deconstruction of secularization. This will be accomplished by one presenting the
inception of Professional Soccer Ministries. Secondly, a review of the cultural/societal
shift from Christendom to Enlightenment thought and its implications for the church of
the modern era will be discussed. Third, the methodology and pragmatic implementation
of Professional Soccer Ministries will be reviewed and conclusions drawn based upon its
effectiveness as an avenue of the church for the proactive deconstruction of
secularization.
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CHAPTER ONE

PROFESSIONAL SOCCER MINISTRIES

Introduction

At some point along the continuum from the past up to the present, many within the church have lost sight of a biblical worldview. This is not to suggest that the church has altogether forsaken the fundamental doctrines of the faith, but rather to suggest that in many circumstances it appears it has lost sight of a pragmatic understanding of what it means to be a Christian within an ever changing environment currently predominated by secularism. As a result of the process of secularization, the church today faces a great challenge: Whether to conform to the “pattern of this world” or redefine what it means to exercise one’s faith in light of the aforementioned conditions (Romans 12:2 NIV).¹

The twenty-first century is an era of intense change. Technological advances, shifting philosophy and the creation of a global community as a result of the process of manifold globalizing agents have all attributed to the proliferation of change. An understanding of this intensified process of change and the ramifications of its processes upon society necessitates the question, “How should the church respond?”² Is this an era for the church to insulate itself from the world in fear of the deconstruction of holiness

¹ All scripture reference will be cited from the New International Version unless otherwise noted.
² Throughout this paper the terms “the Church” and “Christianity” will be used interchangeably.
within the church, or does this current era of intense change warrant an uprising within the church to fight against the effects of secularism surrounding its four walls?

**Justification for the Study**

This study originates out of the personal faith journey of this writer and seeks to respond to the process of secularization through the implementation and subsequent examination of a ministry that has developed in light of significant facets of that journey. While all faith journeys are unique, a discussion of this writer’s journey bears consideration as one seeks to provide justification for this study. The following may serve as a brief personal testimony of this writer as it pertains to the conception and development of Professional Soccer Ministries and the potential deconstruction of secularization through the concept and pragmatic application of that ministry.

**Personal Testimony**

While this writer was raised under the guidance of a largely Christian worldview, he did not become a Christian until age eighteen. For most of this writer’s life it was thought that Christianity was primarily founded upon the constructs of, or ability to be “good.” At the age of eighteen this writer entered into a personal relationship with God through an understanding of his true nature (fallen) and the reception of God’s grace extended to him through the atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

Immediately being impassioned to know and serve Christ, this writer began consistently asking God how he might serve Him best in light of his unique gifts, talents and passions in life. This writer was continually frustrated throughout the early years of his faith journey as he felt unqualified to serve God and deficient in the knowledge
assumed necessary to be effective in Kingdom work. This writer believed he only knew one thing well – soccer. Soccer had been his life-long consuming passion. In many ways soccer seemed like “life” to this writer.

During the third year of this writer’s undergraduate experience he was drafted into the top professional soccer league of the United States. This was the fulfillment of a life-long dream, yet assuming he would be drafted again the following year he decided to forgo the opportunity and finish his undergraduate education.

Despite a lifetime of preparation for a professional soccer career, this writer contracted mononucleosis during his final year of undergraduate education forcing him to miss most of that soccer season and the potential of becoming a professional soccer player at that time. In the midst of utter disappointment and loss of all prior identity, God began to show this writer his true identity in Christ, and the first inklings of what that identity embodies when pragmatically applied to life in the secular society of the twenty-first century. At that time this writer consciously decided to leave his passion to pursue the service of God. It was unknown to this writer that God would ultimately reignite that passion and utilizes this writer’s gifting within the sport of soccer for His ultimate glory and Kingdom purposes.

Inception of Professional Soccer Ministries

In the midst of pursuing a Masters degree in Education this writer was presented with an opportunity to participate in a short-term mission project in Zimbabwe, Uganda and Kenya. This writer was not seeking an opportunity of this nature yet in retrospect it seems that God was seeking him. Hoping to establish a fellowship/outreach group on the campus of California State University, Stanislaus this writer approached two sports
ministry organizations through electronic correspondence. Sending an identical appeal for help to both organizations this writer received two different responses. The first organization, Fellowship of Christian Athletes (FCA) responded positively to this writer’s appeal for help. They agreed to meet with this writer and assist with the establishment of an on-campus fellowship/outreach group. The second organization, Athletes in Action (AIA) neglected the appeal for help but offered this writer the opportunity to participate in the aforementioned mission project in Africa.

While this writer had not played soccer in almost two-years at the time of the short-term mission project to Africa, God birthed Professional Soccer Ministries (PSM) on that trip. For three weeks he traveled with fifteen high-level soccer players serving God through soccer. While serving God through soccer was a completely foreign concept to this writer prior to that trip, an experience in Zimbabwe would ultimately launch this writer into what has currently become an eight year vocational soccer ministry career.

As he traveled within Africa he began to understand the global popularity of soccer. For the first time this writer began to understand that soccer is a “global language” that has the ability to transcend linguistic, racial, political, socio-economic, and religious barriers as little else can. He began to understand soccer as a radically globalizing force within the world; an entity more widely known and participated in than the United Nations. Having witnessed first-hand the globalizing power of soccer and the

3 To learn more about the ministry and vision of Fellowship of Christian Athletes visit www.fca.org.

4 To learn more about the ministry and vision of Athletes in Action visit www.aia.com.

5 FIFA, the governing body of soccer currently has more participating nations (207) than the United Nations (191).
ability to meet people on their terms through the cross-cultural language of the game, it became evident to this writer that he needed to more fully utilize his God-given talent and passion for eternal purposes through soccer.

Soccer Becoming Sacred

While the conceptual and theological impetus for Professional Soccer Ministries will be more fully addressed within chapter three of this study, it is preliminarily noted that Professional Soccer Ministries finds much of its rationale within the notion that soccer has sacred potential given the individual, and motivation of the individual utilizing the sport.

Throughout the history of the church there has been much debate regarding things sacred and things secular. The true nature of “things” has been at the heart of this debate. The question is posed: “What things are sacred and what things are secular?” Subsequently, the question of a thing’s usability has arisen; what things can be used for sacred purposes and what things are limited to secular use?

It has become this writer’s belief that all “things” were inceptively created to be sacred, yet sin and death have rendered most things amoral, neither sacred nor secular. Thus, a thing’s nature is no longer inherent within itself, but externally derived from its user. This being the case, one can conclude that if a thing is neither sacred nor secular in and of itself, the user, by way of their nature (sacred or secular), and the motivation driving their use of a particular “thing” infers that things nature upon itself in regard to a given context whereby that thing is being used.

In light of this notion, Professional Soccer Ministries (PSM) has sought to intentionally utilize the game of soccer and specifically the arena of professional soccer
for sacred purposes. Given the nature of those endeavoring to use soccer for sacred purposes, and the motivation driving that endeavor, Professional Soccer Ministries has been enabled to serve as an evangelistic arm of the church worldwide and as a powerful tool to be used in response to the process of secularization and the acute change happening within society at large.

A Missionary Culture

As society is in the process of shifting from modernity to postmodernity, those outside the church have become less and less tolerant of what might be considered traditional forms of evangelism. As a result of the predominant postmodern worldview many have become disillusioned with modern rationalization, subsequently turning to that which can be experienced first-hand. It is this writer’s belief that the church must respond by creating a “missionary culture” in all things. As the Apostle Paul writes in the aforementioned passage to the church at Corinth, “Whatever you do, do it all to the glory of God.” So, the church of the modern era must become those who affirm, proclaim and pragmatically realize that “whether you eat or drink,” if one is a plumber, car salesman, doctor or soccer player, all Christ-followers were created to be “missionaries” for the “glory of God.” Author, Reggie McNeal notes, “We need to recapture the mission of the church. . . the appropriate response to the emerging world [modern era] is a rebooting of the mission, a radical obedience to an ancient command, a loss of self rather than self-preoccupation, concern about service and sacrifice rather than

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6 Reggie McNeal, The Present Future (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2003). This concept was inferred within McNeal’s work but not discussed in the direct terms of a “missionary culture.”
Thus, it is the position of this writer that Christians must now be empowered as missionaries in all walks of life, rather than stringently adhering to the modern concept of compartmentalized roles and functions of the priesthood. It is believed that a correct understanding and subsequent application of the missional church worldview will serve to deconstruct the globalized effects of secularization thus ultimately fulfilling the Great Commission of the church and the expansion of God’s Kingdom and glory.

The Globalization of Soccer

The origins of soccer are an enigma to some and convoluted at best. While the British are given credit for the official inception of soccer, its roots can be traced as far back as 200-300 B.C., and linked to the Chinese. Referencing art and literature from the Han period (206 BC - 220 AD), it is suggested that people participated in a game that involved kicking a ball, though the use of the hands and body may have been more predominant within this ancient game. An ancient Chinese military manual suggests the Chinese may have utilized this kicking game as an aspect of their training, as the Confucian scholar and politician Liu Xin (ca. 50 BC - 23 AD) notes within his seven teachings; “Taju bingshi,” which suggests “football (strengthens) the fighting power of

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7 Ibid., 12 and 18.

8 This is largely due to their inception of the first official Football Association (F.A.) in 1863. The English F.A. served to standardize soccer, which previous to 1863 lacked a formal process or standardized rules.

soldiers.” Variations of the ancient Chinese game are recorded, yet one popular exercise whereby a player had to withstand the attacks of his opponents while moving a ball towards a specified target without the use of hands, seems to be most noted.\textsuperscript{11}

In addition to evidence of a form of soccer being played amongst the ancient Chinese during the Han period, the Japanese also played some form of kicking game 500 years later. The Greeks played a kicking game called “episkyros” and the Romans had a derivation called “harpastum.”\textsuperscript{12} It is suggested that the Romans took a kicking game to the British Isles, yet it is not known if this was the game that ultimately developed into the modern version of soccer.

The modern version of soccer underwent several transitions and augmentations preceding its standardization in 1863.\textsuperscript{13} Prior to 1863 soccer may have more appropriately been referred to as a “village grudge match,” as an entire village would play against another village with very few rules and no limitations on the number of participants. This early British version of soccer was disorganized and violent, yet as its popularity grew it would ultimately necessitate the 1863 meetings and the subsequent formation of the English Football Association.

The history of soccer is far more decipherable following the formation of the English Football Association, and the proliferation of the game seems to be frenetic from that point forward. While Scotland was the next nation to establish a formal Football

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{10} Ibid. \\
\textsuperscript{11} Ibid. \\
\textsuperscript{12} Dr. Wilfried Gerhardt, “The Colorful History of a Fascinating Game,” Fifa.com; available from http://www.fifa.com/en/history/history/0,1283,1,00.html; Internet; accessed 02 May 2006. \\
\textsuperscript{13} Ibid.
\end{flushright}
Association in 1873, the first International soccer match was played between England and Scotland in 1872, and the 1885 legalization of professionalism within soccer only served to further promote the game.\textsuperscript{14}

Most scholars suggest the rapid proliferation and globalization of soccer following its standardization in 1864 to be attributable to “British influence abroad,” and the 1904 founding of the \textit{Fédération Internationale de Football Association} (FIFA).\textsuperscript{15} FIFA reports that seven nations participated in the 1904 founding: France, Belgium, Denmark, the Netherlands, Spain, Sweden and Switzerland. In 1912 twenty-one nations were involved with FIFA. In 1925 thirty-six nations had joined, and by the year of the first world cup, 1930, FIFA had grown to 41 nations.\textsuperscript{16}

Today soccer is played by over 300 million people around the world. In 2006 FIFA has 207 member nations,\textsuperscript{17} and the British soccer club Manchester United is reported to be the highest valued professional sports franchise in the world ($338.54 million dollars in annual revenue).\textsuperscript{18} Soccer is by far the most popular sport in the world with over 28.8 billion total viewers of the 2002 World Cup and 1.3 billion viewers of the cup’s final game.\textsuperscript{19} Simon Kuper, a well known sports writer, comments, “When a game

\textsuperscript{14} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{15} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{16} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{17} The FIFA membership is contextualized by an understanding of the United Nations 191 total member nations.


\textsuperscript{19} Compare that with the 200 million that viewed the 2006 Winter Olympics or the 130 million that viewed the 2006 NFL Superbowl.
matters to billions of people it ceases to be just a game. Football [soccer] is never just football: it helps make wars and revolutions, and it fascinates mafias and dictators.”  

Soccer as a potential means towards the deconstruction of Secularization

It is noted that there is an Italian axiom that suggests when a man receives money he buys himself something to eat, goes to the soccer stadium, and then “sees if he has anything left to find a place to live.” While many of the smallest villages around the world are classified as a village in light of a church and a soccer field, the Brazilians say, ‘well, not always a church, but certainly a football [soccer] field.’ Despite one’s opinion of what many refer to as “the beautiful game,” it is difficult to deny soccer’s global presence. It is no stretch to suggest that soccer has become a global phenomenon as it involves over one-sixth of the world’s population in some capacity.

Speaking to the Italian national soccer team in 1930, Benito Mussolini proclaimed, “Win or die.” Soccer is far more than a sport to many - soccer is life. Writer Franklin Foer refers to a man named “Dummy” as he notes, “He [Dummy] has a life-consuming passion for his team. He points in the direction of his Rangers boxer shorts. “I love Rangers football club. If I had to choose between my job and Rangers,

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21 Ibid., 1.

22 Ibid., 1.

23 Based on the Population Reference Bureau’s [www.prb.org](http://www.prb.org) world population estimate of 6.4 billion people and a single game viewership of the 2002 world cup final of 1.3 billion.

I’d choose Rangers. If I had to choose between my wife and Rangers, I’d choose Rangers.”

The reality of soccer’s global appeal is that it has not only captivated people’s attention but it has also garnered their allegiance as well. Speaking towards this phenomenon and referencing Rangers Football Club in Glasgow, Scotland, Foer notes, “It’s easy to link support for a soccer club with religiosity. But in an important way, Rangers has actually replaced the Church of Scotland. It allows men…to join the tradition and institutions of their forefathers, to allay fears about abandoning history without having to embrace their forefathers’ eschatology.” If this is the present day reality, one in which soccer teams replace religious institutions, and even faith in God, the church can choose to fight against the efficacy of soccer or harness its dynamism for Kingdom purposes, in an effort to reclaim what was incipiently created for the glory of God.

God has presented the church with a potential vehicle for the deconstruction of secularization; soccer. While soccer has grown in its scope and popularity through the process of globalization, so has secularism ridden on that same wave of global proliferation. Secularism predominates most of the developed world and threatens to overtake the developing world as well. Yet, soccer may be strategically positioned to be utilized for the reversal of secularization’s global effects. As Foer suggests, “National borders and national identities have been swept into the dustbin of soccer history.” Thus, it is time for the church to acknowledge, embrace and utilize soccer among other

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26 Ibid., 56.

27 Ibid., 3.
vehicles, as one of the potential avenues afforded to the church to combat the reality of secularization in the modern era.

**Statement of the Problem**

As one considers the current state of change occurring within much of the Western world it may be concluded that the church faces a major dilemma. Speaking of the dilemma the church faces today, Malphurs notes, “If we don’t adapt our methods to meet the needs of emerging generations, in time we’ll have no younger generation of the church.” Church-growth researcher Win Arn indicates a drastic decline in church attendance. Arn comments, “Today, of the approximately 350,000 churches in America, four out of five are either plateaued or declining.” It is reported that in 1939 church attendance in the United States was 41%. In 1957 church attendance had risen to 47%. Yet, in 1998 church attendance had declined to 40%. Citing the American Religious Identification Survey 2001, released by the Graduate Center of the City University of New York, authors Ed Stetzer and David Putman note, “The percentage proportion of Christians in the U.S. has declined – from 86 percent in 1990 to 77 percent in 2001.” Additionally, Stetzer and Putman refer to a Barna Group study that explains the adult

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28 It is noted that countries and cultures outside of what is determined to be the “Western world” may also be in a current state of sociological transition from modernity to postmodernity, yet for the purposes of this study the Western world is specifically addressed.

29 Aubrey Malphurs and Michael Malphurs, *Church Next* (Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 2003), 35.


31 Ibid., 19.

population in the United State to have grown by 15% from 1991 through 2004. Yet, as the adult population grew between 1991 through 2004, those who do not attend church nearly doubled, “rising from 39 million to 75 million – a 92% increase!”

While statistics may evidence a decline in American church attendance and many other nations within the Western world, it is important to note that these statistics are only representative of “church attendance” and do not speak to the attitude of one’s heart in their church attendance, or the nature of one’s relationship to God. This concept was inferred within McNeal’s work but not discussed in the direct terms of a “missionary culture.”

The process of secularization has resulted in the drastic decline in church attendance and the more serious problem of biblical bankruptcy within Western societies. Dating back to the era of Enlightenment and the emergence of philosophers such as John Locke and David Hume, the church has been forced to respond to the process of secularization. It was not that Locke and Hume wrote on secularization, but their ideas served to assist with the removal of the concept of church and state. In many ways this writer believes the church has failed in its response to this philosophy thus necessitating a project of this nature.

The church must return to a biblical worldview that conceives all of life as worship of God, and as intended for the express purpose of God’s ultimate glory. Only if and when the church corporately embraces a biblical worldview that conceives all of life as worship for the express purpose of God’s glory, will the process of secularization be countered and potentially reversed.

33 Ibid., 8-9.
While secularization has been advanced through the sociological process of globalization, it is the belief of this writer that the same sociological process of globalization can be utilized by the church to reverse the detrimental process of secularization. On the basis of this belief and eight years of first-hand experience within the field of sports ministry, this study will be guided by the following six questions (each of the six questions will also be composed of several contributing questions):

1. In this current era how does the process of secularization challenge the church worldwide?
2. In this current era how does the process of globalization affect the church worldwide?
3. In this current era how should the church respond to increased secularism in the wake of globalization?
4. In this current era how does soccer ministry relate to the church’s response to secularism in the wake of globalization?
5. In this current era how does Professional Soccer Ministries consociate with the church’s response to secularization in the wake of globalization?
6. In this current era is Professional Soccer Ministries an effective tool of the church for the deconstruction of secularism?

These six questions will serve to guide this study and provide the basis for subsequent recommendations in light of the literature review and subsequent discussion of the utilization of Professional Soccer Ministries as an agent towards the deconstruction of secularism.
Statement of Scope and Limitations

Outside of the parameters of the aforementioned six questions, this project will be limited in the following ways. First, this study specifically considers the scope and implications of soccer ministry. While soccer ministry will be shown as a potentially effective ministry tool and agent towards the potential deconstruction of secularization it is only one facet of the holistic field of sports ministry. Second, soccer ministry will be shown to be an effective avenue of ministry within this current era, yet it is only one avenue of multitudinous options for effective ministry within this era. The exclusion of any discussion towards the validity, and or potential of other avenues of ministry within this current era do not negate their potential effectiveness as this study solely considers soccer ministry autonomous of other avenues of ministry. Third, a review of the literature will reveal overt secularism as predominant within Western society and may or may not apply to other regions of the world. While the ramifications of secularization will be inferred as a global phenomenon, the discussion of Western society will be the primary focus of this study. Fourth, this study defines secularization as, “To draw away from religious orientation; to make worldly.”34 While this study draws primarily from this definition, it acknowledges that the process of secularization encompasses several nuances. Fifth, this study defines globalization as, “To make global in scope or application.”35 While this study draws primarily from this definition, it acknowledges that the process of globalization encompasses several nuances. Sixth, soccer ministry and the specific avenue of Professional Soccer Ministry are still in a relative state of infancy.

35 Ibid.
The review of literature will reveal limited documentation of scholarly resources in light of limited sources. Seventh, while the sociological concepts “modernity” and “postmodernity” are referred to throughout this study, no specific discourse will be given towards their definition or sociological details.

The Biblical Theological Basis for the Project

In consideration of a biblical, and or theological basis for this project it must first be noted that Scripture communicates God as the author of a story – His story. Numerous biblical narratives could be cited as evidence of this theological notion, yet to fully comprehend Scripture (and everything else) as a facet of God’s holistic autobiography, an examination of His selected modus operandi must be completed.

Despite a heightened state of change within this modern era, Scripture communicates God as immutable. The author of Hebrews writes, “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.” God’s finite creation exists within a temporal state of inconsistency, yet His immutability is clearly observed within many of the Old and New Testament narratives and Scripture as a whole. Malachi 3:6 teaches the doctrine of immutability: “I the Lord do not change.” As James 1:17 indicates there is no variation or shifting shadow with God. It is because of this dynamic of God’s immutability and man’s inconsistency that God’s eternal and pre-eminent story must be noted.

Speaking towards God’s authority and final judgment of all men (those created as participants in His story), the prophet Isaiah writes, “Before me every knee will bow; by

36 Hebrews 13:8
me every tongue will swear.‖ Paul also speaks of Jesus Christ’s pre-eminence within His story as he similarly communicates to the church in Philippi, “At the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.” Thus, the immutable God is in the process of writing His own story, that His ultimate glory might be seen, experienced and magnified throughout all-time. Louie Giglio comments:

God is big. We are not. He is calling the shots, directing the script, and determining the plot. We are not. And, what’s really wild is that while He doesn’t need any of us, He is choosing to include us, inviting us into the story that never ends.

Given an appropriate understanding of God’s immutability and man’s inconsistency in light of the eternal story God is in the process of writing, it can then be concluded that man was created to “participate.” Jesus’ final words to the church represent this eternal calling to participate. In Matthew 28:18-20 Jesus commissions the church:

All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.

The Great Commission to the church instructs believers to participate in God’s redemptive story through the works of evangelization and discipleship. While scripture is clear in its instruction to participate in this redemptive work, it is vague as it pertains to the means by which the church shall accomplish the work.

37 Isaiah 45:23
38 Philippians 2:10-11
39 Louie Giglio, i am not but I know I AM (Sisters, Oregon: Multnomah Publishers, Inc., 2005), 40.
It has been stated that a debate between things sacred and things secular exists within the church (i.e. things acceptable for the church to use for God’s glory, and things not acceptable for the church to use for God’s glory). Based on the aforementioned notion that “things” are neither sacred nor secular but derive their nature from the inference of their user, and in light of passages such as 1 Corinthians 10:31, “So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God,” and Colossians 3:17, “And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him,” it is concluded that all things were inceptively intended for sacred purposes (i.e., God’s glory). This is not to suggest that all things are utilized for sacred purposes, but rather to contend for their inceptive objectives as holy creations for the glory of God. Anything not utilized for its inceptive objective of God’s glory is classified as sin. Commenting on sin, Piper writes, “It [sin] is a suicidal exchange of infinite value and beauty for some fleeting, inferior substitute.”\(^{40}\) Piper refers to this “exchange” of original “infinite value and beauty” for any inferior substitute as the “great insult” of God.\(^{41}\)

### Biblical Basis for Sports Ministry

If God is in the process of writing a grand redemptive story, and all things were originally created for the expressed purpose of His ultimate glory, it may be inferred that sport was created for God’s glory, and originally intended to be utilized as a facet of, or tool within God’s pre-eminent story. Drawing largely from the unpublished work of David Oakley, twelve principles emerge as a biblical basis for the use of sport as a form


\(^{41}\) Ibid., 36.
of ministry. The twelve principles and their corresponding Scriptural references are as follows:

1. Longevity Principle (2 Timothy 3:10 – 4:8)
2. Silence Principle (Hebrews 12 and 1 Corinthians 9)
3. Creation Principle (Genesis 1:24-28)
4. Stewardship Principle (Exodus 35:4-35)
5. Worship Principle (Deuteronomy)
7. Newness Principle (Psalms and Isaiah)
8. Sacrifice Principle (Romans 12)
9. Foolish Principle (1 Corinthians 1:18-31)
10. Liberty Principle (1 Corinthians 9:1-23)
11. Reconciliation Principle (2 Corinthians 5:11-21)
12. Church Growth Principle (Ephesians 4:1-16)

As sport is ambiguous within Scripture it is difficult to identify one verse as an all-encompassing biblical basis for sports ministry. It is in light of this ambiguity that the aforementioned biblical basis for sports ministry is founded on biblical principle rather than direct Scriptural quotation.

Definition of Terms

2. Vocational Ministry – “Of or relating to a vocation or vocations.” The vocation of Christian service.
3. Soccer – “A game played on a rectangular field with net goals at either end in which two teams of 11 players each try to drive a ball into the other’s goal by kicking, heading, or using any part of the body except the arms and hands. The

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42 This writer thanks David Oakley for his continued thought and work on a biblically based apologetic for sports ministry. This writer also thanks David Oakley for his permission to present the biblical basis for sports ministry within this study. David Oakley’s biblical basis for sports ministry can be viewed in its entirety within Appendix A.

goalie is the only player who may touch or move the ball with the arms or hands.”

4. Drafted – “A system in which the exclusive rights to new players are distributed among professional teams; the process or method of selecting one or more individuals from a group, as for a service or duty.”

5. Undergraduate – “A college or university student who has not yet received a bachelor's or similar degree.”

6. Short-term Mission Project – A faith-based service project with a fixed time limit.

7. Modernism – A philosophy and civilization largely based on rational inquiry, empirical evidence and scientific discovery beginning in the 18th century.

8. Postmodernism – A rejection of, and rebellion against key aspects of modernism; a philosophical and societal movement towards relativism.

9. Missional church – A concept of church that empowers members as missionaries within all facets of life.

10. Christendom – “Christianity as a territorial phenomenon; the medieval and renaissance notion of the Christian world as a sort of social and political polity. In essence, the vision of Christendom is a vision of a Christian theocracy, a government devoted to the enforcement of Christian values, and whose institutions are suffused with Christian piety.”

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45 Ibid.

46 Ibid.


11. Mentor-player – Returning Professional Soccer Ministries Academy participants intentionally partnered with first-time Professional Soccer Ministries Academy participants for the purpose of mentorship and discipleship throughout the duration of the academy.


13. Professional Soccer Ministries Associate – A professional soccer player operating in cooperation with the vision and mission of Professional Soccer Ministries, though not an employee of Ambassadors in Sport.

14. Immutable – “That perfection of God by which He is devoid of all change, not only in His Being, but also in His perfections, and in His purposes and promises . . . and is free from all accession or diminution and from all growth or decay in His Being or perfections.”

Description of Methodology

This project will be a qualitative study based largely around the personal experience and observations of the writer. The first chapter of this project will describe the purpose for the project and an overview of the problem to be considered within each of the following chapters. A description of the limitations of this project and a definition of terms is provided. The rest of this project will be divided into four sections. The first section (chapter two) will provide a review of the literature. The following topics will be addressed: the early church and the influence of Constantine, the rise of secularization, and the rise of globalization. In addition, the following questions will be answered: In

49 Louis Berkhof, Systematic Theology (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1941), 58.
this current era how do the processes of secularization and globalization affect the church? How should the church respond to secularization in the wake of globalization? How does soccer ministry relate to the church’s response to secularization in the wake of globalization?

The third chapter of this project will provide an outline and discussion of the theological impetus underpinning Professional Soccer Ministries.

The fourth chapter of this project will contain an examination of the objectives of Professional Soccer Ministries. A detailed description and justification for this ministry will be provided. The following questions will be answered: How does Professional Soccer Ministries consociate with the church’s response to secularization in the wake of globalization? In this current era how does Professional Soccer Ministries consociate with the church’s response to secularization in the wake of globalization?

The fifth chapter of this study will contain an examination of the pragmatic application of Professional Soccer Ministries. All facets of the ministry will be reviewed and a subsequent analysis provided. The following question will be answered: In this current era is Professional Soccer Ministries an effective tool of the church for the deconstruction of secularism?

The sixth chapter of this study will serve as a recommendation to the church in light of the heightened state of change within this modern era. A summary of the project will be made and conclusions drawn.
**Review of Literature**

While there are multitudinous sources on the processes of secularization and globalization, little scholarly work has been given towards the potential deconstruction of secularization through globalization. It is then the intent of this writer to provide initiatory thought and writing in regard to this objective.

It is the intent of this writer to investigate the early Constantinian notion that church and state should be unified (council of Nicea, AD 325). While it is not the intent of this writer to suggest that Constantine was correct or incorrect in this notion, it is the intent of this writer to review one potential theory behind this notion, namely, the notion that all things were created in and for the glory of God, thus it would logically follow that God should pervade all created things.

The Constantinian notion will be followed into the Enlightenment period, at which time the ideas of philosophers such as John Locke, David Hume and others will be reviewed. The purpose of this review will not be to feature the works and ideas of these philosophers, yet rather to discuss the consequences of their ideas upon society and the initiation of what may be referred to as secularization today.

With respect to the philosophical ideas of the aforementioned philosophers, and the ramifications of their ideas within society, the process of globalization will be reviewed. This writer has acknowledged within the limitations of this study that the processes of both secularization and globalization have multifarious nuances, thus the review of these processes will specifically address the interrelationship between the two processes and their ramifications within this modern era.
Drawing heavily from the works of Franklin Foer, *How Soccer Explains the World: an (unlikely) theory of globalization* and Simon Kuper, *Football Against The Enemy*, this writer will discuss the implications of soccer within and upon the processes of secularization and globalization. It is believed that if the church of this modern era is to reverse the process of global secularism it must become missional in its approach and seeking of new opportunities towards evangelism. Soccer will be proposed as one potential avenue towards the deconstruction of secularization. In addition, the reciprocal implications of the church’s embrace of soccer will be identified and the potential deconstruction of compartmentalization within the church discussed.

**Summary**

Throughout this chapter this writer has attempted to provide an overview of the fundamental components comprising this study. The justification for the study was considered in addition to the six research problems, statement of the limitations, theological basis, definition of terms, description of the methodology and review of literature. While none of the aforementioned components comprising this study were considered in depth, a more comprehensive treatment of each component will be provided in each of the remaining chapters.

Chapter two of this study will consider literature pertaining to the potential deconstruction of secularism through the globalization of soccer in conjunction with a biblical worldview.
CHAPTER TWO
LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to consider literature pertaining to the potential deconstruction of secularism through the globalization of soccer in conjunction with a biblical worldview. The following topics will be addressed: the early church and the influence of Constantine towards Christendom, the consequences of ideas and the rise of secularization, and the rise and specified implications of globalization. In addition, the following questions will be answered: In this current era how do the processes of secularization and globalization affect the church? How should the church respond to secularism in the wake of globalization? How does soccer ministry relate to the church’s response to secularism in the wake of globalization?

The Early Church

While it is the intent of this writer to discuss the early church and the influence of Constantine, it is not purposed to provide an exhaustive examination of church history. Rather, the purpose of a discussion of the early church and the influence of Constantine shall serve to prepare the reader for a more exhaustive examination of the societal implications of Christendom and its theoretical effects towards a worldview that saw God as pervasive within all facets of one’s life.
Author’s Walker et al. suggest the Christian movement first took shape as a sect or grouping within the environs of Judaism. While there may have been followers of Jesus in towns and villages such as Judea and Galilee, the Christian movement had its center in Jerusalem. Walker et al. note, “The Jerusalem community, however, enjoyed relative peace, obviously maintaining its loyalty to temple and Law and having, at least for a time, no direct involvement with the new mission or with the new centers of Christian life in places like Antioch and Damascus,” which were suggested to have begun in response to Stephen’s death and the scattering of Hellenist leaders. While the early community of Christ followers grew somewhat peacefully preceding A.D. 64, political and ecclesiastical persecution of the church began in response to a fire purportedly started by Christians in Rome. Christ followers may or many not have started the fire that raged for more than a week and ruined ten of Rome’s fourteen districts, yet Nero, the Roman emperor from A.D. 54-68 sought a scapegoat and placed all blame for the fire upon Christians. Citing the Roman historian Tacitus, Walker et al. comment, “Christians were arrested and tried, not so much for arson, we are told, as for “hatred of the human race”; and they were put to death by methods calculated to provide lurid entertainment for the public.”

In light of Nero’s persecution of Christians beginning in A.D. 64 he is noted as the first major persecutor of the church. Following Nero’s reign the church would undergo “local and sporadic” persecution until A.D. 250, when persecution intensified

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51 Ibid., 25.

52 Ibid.

53 Ibid., 32.
under the rule of Decius.\textsuperscript{54} In an edict issued in 250 all Roman citizens were required to make an annual offering of sacrifice at the Roman altars to the gods and the genius of the emperor.\textsuperscript{55} According to author Henry Bettenson, all those who successfully offered the required sacrifice were given a certificate called a libellus,\textsuperscript{56} to confirm their compliance with the edict. Sacrifice at the Roman altars posed a major problem for the church, yet Decius’ death in 251 temporarily alleviated the church’s persecution.

The alleviation of persecution would not last long as the church continued to be viewed as a threat to the Roman Empire and its classic culture. Thus, with the reign of Diocletian (245-313) the church entered an era of “the most severe persecution” Christians have ever endured.\textsuperscript{57} Having decided that the only potential to restore the Roman Empire was through a strong monarchy, Diocletian ended the diarchy of the principate in 285, by which the emperor and the senate had shared authority.\textsuperscript{58}

Commenting on the Diocletian persecution of the church, author Earle Cairns states:

\begin{quote}
The first edicts calling for persecution of the Christians came in March 303. Diocletian ordered the cessation of meetings of the Christians, the destruction of the churches, the deposition of officers of the church, the imprisonment of those who persisted in their testimony to Christ, and the destruction of the Scriptures by fire. . . A later edict ordered Christians to sacrifice to the pagan gods on pain of death if they refused. . . Christians were punished by loss of property, exile, imprisonment, or execution by the sword or wild beasts. The more fortunate
\end{quote}


\textsuperscript{55} Ibid.


\textsuperscript{58} Ibid.
were sent to the Roman equivalent of a totalitarian labor camp where they were worked to death in the mines.\textsuperscript{59}

While the early church was characterized by persecution throughout the Diocletian reign, Christianity was not eradicated. In fact, in the face of persecution the church grew and Christianity flourished. Cairns notes, “The rapid spread of Christianity, even during the periods of heaviest persecution, proved that indeed the blood of the martyrs was the seed of the church.”\textsuperscript{60}

The Influence of Constantine towards Christendom

Author Mark Noll has referred to the church of the first three centuries as a “pilgrim community,”\textsuperscript{61} in light of the persecution and subsequent effects of the Roman Empires’ stance towards the church. Yet, Constantine, son of the former Roman emperor Constantius would radically alter the position of the church within the Roman Empire, and ultimately change the course of history.

After abdicating the imperial throne in 305, Diocletian left three adversaries to battle for the right to become his successor.\textsuperscript{62} Defeating his strongest rival at the battle of Milvian Bridge, north of Rome, Constantine became co-emperor with Licinius in 312. Author Earle Cairns comments on Constantine and the battle of Milvian Bridge in stating, “When his [Constantine’s] enemies seemed about to overwhelm him in 312, he is said to have had a vision of a cross in the sky with the words “in this sign conquer” in Latin.

\textsuperscript{59} Ibid., 92-93.

\textsuperscript{60} Ibid., 93.

\textsuperscript{61} Mark A. Noll, Turning Points: Decisive Moments in the History of Christianity (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2000), 62.

\textsuperscript{62} Ibid., 50.
Taking it as a favorable omen, he went on to defeat his enemies."⁶³ As a result of this victory Constantine believed the Christian god had providentially assisted his cause thus motivating a life-long future predisposition towards Christianity. Cairns suggests, “Whether or not this interpretation of his motives is correct, Constantine embarked on a policy of favoring the Christian church."⁶⁴

While Constantine may have “favored” the church it was not necessarily derived from an allegiance to God as much as it was a strategy for the accomplishment of his own agenda. Walker et al. write:

In the mind of Constantine, there was probably, at least to begin with, little difference between the monotheism of the Christians and that of the Sun-cult which the emperor Aurelian had fostered and which he himself had consciously espoused after 310. Each proclaimed the supremacy of a single transcendent deity by whose rule the subordinate “powers” of the cosmos were ordered. Each, therefore, projected a picture of the world-order consonant with Constantine’s sense of his own mission: to restore a universal monarchy which would integrate and unify human society on earth. Nevertheless, it was the Christian God who had brought Constantine victory before the walls of Rome, and after that victory it was the Christian churches on which Constantine relied to offer the one God, the “summa divinitas,” the worship which alone could assure the well-being of the empire and the successful issue of his own enterprise.⁶⁵

Much like his predecessor Diocletian, Constantine was extremely concerned about the stability of the Roman Empire and the maintenance of its classic culture. Yet, while Diocletian made an unsuccessful attempt to obliterate Christianity in light of its perceived threat towards Greco-Roman culture, Constantine realized that if Christianity could not

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⁶⁴ Ibid.

be removed by force, he would operate under the antithetical strategy of utilizing the
church to preserve the Greco-Roman culture. Noll comments:

"Once Constantine began to act on behalf of the church, and once his successors
began simply to assume that imperial rule had something to do with the church,
the church had left behind the conditions of its first three centuries. Those
conditions had underscored the church’s existence as a pilgrim community, not at
home in any part of the world, since the power of the state could be turned at any
moment to uproot believers, propel them into exile, or disrupt the regular order of
worship and Christian service."

As a result of Constantine’s affection for and use of the church to preserve Greco-
Roman culture the church and society at-large entered into Christendom (that is, the
union of church and state). Author Martin Marty suggests Christendom to mean “that
system of Christian teachings fused with institutions which penetrated most sectors of
Western life after fourth century A.D., a system which provided the population with a
scheme for organizing and interpreting their social and personal life.” Additionally,
author Douglas Groothuis comments, “The era of Christendom in Western culture is
considered the grand example of premodern existence. Society was generally united
under one religion, which prescribed rules and roles and beliefs.”

For much of Christendom the church saw the proliferation of Christianity on a
global scale, and enjoyed the benefits of its widely accepted beliefs. Commenting on
proliferation of Christian belief and practice within Christendom, Noll writes:

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As the Christian faith spread into northern and western Europe, the actions of rulers in initiating, promoting, supporting, and (often) dictating to the church gradually accustomed leaders in both church and state to notions of establishment. When rulers publicly acknowledged the centrality of the church to all of life, it was difficult for the church not to respond by assuming that it had a vitally important role to play in this life, as well as for the life to come.70

Additionally, Adrian Hastings suggests that Christendom saw a “vast public Christianization of society.”71 He continues in commenting:

The majority of senior people in power were soon at least nominal Christians. Bishops everywhere became figures of importance in society and large churches were erected at public expense in all the main cities of the empire. . . Even in provinces like Britain where Christianity was a somewhat late arrival and there was only a handful of dioceses, it was penetrating into the countryside and accepted by wealthy landowners, while in North Africa or lower Egypt the rural population was by the late fourth century overwhelmingly Christian.72

While the church benefited from Constantine’s favor and the advantages of Christendom, there were also negative implications. Cairns notes, “The government in return for position, protection, and aid demanded the right to interfere in spiritual and theological matters.”73 For example, Constantine elected himself as the official over the councils of Arles in 314 and Nicaea in 325 despite having only temporal authority of the empire. Speaking towards the double-edged sword that was Christendom, Noll comments:

Much good came of this adjustment, especially as the church’s evangelistic mission benefited from the help of rulers and when the church contributed its resources to the work of civilizing Europe’s barbarian hordes. But the cost was

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72 Ibid.

also high. A world where an emperor could make the critical decision to resolve a great doctrinal crisis was a world in which the emperor’s legitimate concerns for worldly order, success, wealth, and stability almost had to become concerns as well in the church.  

Regardless of one’s opinion of Christendom and the favor of Constantine that inaugurated this period, it must be concluded, as Noll suggests, “Christendom altered the church’s relationship to the world.”

**From Christendom to Secularism**

It has been suggested that Christendom saw a vast public Christianization of society. Christendom was a period in which Christianity enjoyed a proliferation of belief and practice, and the church a widespread acceptance. As Christendom was inaugurated by the aforementioned favor of Roman emperor Constantine during the fourth century through his strategy towards the perseverance of the empire and Greco-Roman culture, society witnessed and subsequently operated under the union of church and state for many centuries to follow. Author Philip Jenkins suggests that the phrase Christendom “evokes a medieval European age of faith, of passionate spirituality and a pervasive Christian culture.” Yet, he goes on to note that Christendom was strewn with strife and difficulty in suggesting, “Christendom. . .was anything but an unmixed blessing for either the Church or society. While it offered a common culture and thought-world, the era was also characterized by widespread intolerance, symbolized at its very worst by aggressive

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75 Ibid., 63.

Crusades, heresy hunts, and religious pogroms.”\(^{77}\) While the historical period of Christendom was not perfect in its conception or pragmatic implementation within society, it does warrant consideration in light of its ultimate successor, secularism.

Despite the acknowledged practical shortcomings of Christendom, it was a historical period in which the church flourished in many ways and experienced manifold success. More than any other factor, the theory that may have subtly, if not overtly pervaded Christendom was one that would inevitably be deconstructed through the rise of secularism and the process of its sociological underpinnings. This theory that undergirded Christendom, albeit potentially only a theory of, and not a reality within this historical period, suggested that God should pervade, motivate and subsume all of life. To follow Christ was therefore a holistically encompassed endeavor that theoretically knew no distinction from any facet of society or life. Yet, as the ideas of scientists and philosophers such as Sir Isaac Newton, John Locke, Baruch Spinoza and David Hume began to take root within society, so went the widespread practice and belief in God as pervasive in all of life, and so emerged the process of secularization.

It is suggested that the process of secularization brought about the end of Christendom. Noll comments that the commencement of secularization saw “the end of that lengthy period of European history when the interests of church and society were thought to be the same and where it was almost universally assumed that Christian spiritual realities were more fundamental than realities of the temporal world.”\(^{78}\) As a result of this process a shift in the way in which Christianity was viewed occurred within

\(^{77}\) Ibid., 12.

most Western Europeans. Hastings suggests that whereas Christianity was generally accepted as true unless valid reasons for doubt surfaced throughout Christendom; secularization caused Christianity to be generally accepted as false unless valid reasons for belief could be presented.\(^\text{79}\)

Author Martin Marty refers to the shift from Christendom to secularism as the “modern schism,” which implies a “splitting between two parties, a division into two entities.”\(^\text{80}\) This accurately portrays the reality of the conclusion of Christendom in the wake of secular thought. Marty comments, “On one side, Christian churches, teachings, and faith remained. On the other, there appeared an alternate set of reasonably thought out and vigorously contended arguments for metaphysical or social doctrines, creeds, and systems.”\(^\text{81}\) As mentioned, much of the culpability for the modern schism and the separation of church from society can be placed upon the ideas of certain scientists and philosophers of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Author Adrian Hastings suggests, “All that we consider most modern and progressive in Western society is generally agreed to owe its origins to the ‘enlightened’ thought of the eighteenth-century philosophers.”\(^\text{82}\) He continues in noting that many of these philosophers esteemed the concepts of “political democracy and the possibility of advancement though merit; the


\(^{81}\) Ibid.

achievements of science and technology; and the freedom of individual conscience from the tyrannies of any single religion or other stat-imposed ideology.""}83

Walker et al. go on to suggest that, “The most potent instruments in effecting this change of atmosphere were the rise of modern science and philosophy, with the immense consequent transformations in outlook upon the universe and upon man’s position in it. . .”84 It is difficult to definitively identify the conclusion of Christendom and the inception and beginning of secularism, yet as the ideas of scientists and philosophers such as Sir Isaac Newton, John Locke and David Hume, are credited as major influencers of secular thought, their ideas must be accounted for.

In consideration of the consequence of certain seventeenth and eighteenth scientists and philosophers upon the deconstruction of Christendom and the erection of secularism, Sir Isaac Newton’s 1687 Principia Mathematica is suggested to have had profound influence. While Newton was a “painstaking student of the Bible”85 his Principia served to demonstrate a new philosophy that he described through his mastery of mathematical formulas. This philosophy was rooted in a rational belief in God and made claim to all facets of life as potentially understood with reference to itself rather than God.86

Sir Isaac Newton’s (1642-1727) English contemporary John Locke’s ideas also had profound influence towards secularism. Locke (1632-1704) was primarily concerned

83 Ibid.


with a branch of philosophy known as epistemology or the theory of knowledge. Just three years after Newton had published his *Principia Mathematica*, Locke published his *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* in 1690. Citing Locke and speaking of the argument presented in An Essay Concerning Human Understanding, Hasting notes:

Locke argued that all human beings were born in a state of ignorance, their minds as empty of ideas as a clean slate or blank page. By living in the world they accumulated experiences – at first only simple sensory experiences such as feeling hot or cold or perceiving softness or hardness. Through their innate ability to reason, these merely animal sensations were abstracted into simple ideas such as ‘solidity’, ‘cold’ or ‘whiteness’. From such simple ideas, more complex ideas were developed, including, according to Locke, the concept of number, the notion of the immaterial soul and the existence of God, all of which his Essay claimed to have proved.\(^87\)

Hastings concludes that Locke suggested that all human knowledge, “including knowledge of God and of the supernatural dimension of life,” could be demonstrated through one’s experience of the world “as filtered through mental reflection.”\(^88\) In light of this Locke argued for the existence of God as seen through cause and effect relationships and had little patience for mystery within religion.

Of similar interest towards the eclipse of Christendom were the ideas of David Hume (1711-1776). Hume was a Scottish philosopher, economist and historian that many suggest to have “destroyed once and for all the law of causality.”\(^89\) As Hume suggests that neither cause nor effect can be objective qualities, in light of all things being either a cause or an effect depending on one’s point of view, he establishes the idea of skepticism


\(^{88}\) Ibid.

or chance.⁹⁰ Author R.C. Sproul notes, “Hume’s skepticism goes beyond the realm of pure causality to the ideas of the self, substance, and God, because none of these can be discovered by an original sensation or impression. Hume denies that we have any idea of the self, which is like saying I have no idea of I.”⁹¹ Thus, whereas Christian belief was widely accepted and practiced within Christendom the ideas of Newton, empiricism of Locke, and the skepticism of Hume drastically served to move society towards secularism.

**Implications of Secularization upon Society**

In consideration of the implications of secularization given the demise of Christendom, it is again noted that thinkers within the fields of science and philosophy throughout the Enlightenment era had profound effect upon society. Author Alasdair MacIntryre refers to the period of Enlightenment as the “Enlightenment project” and suggests the goal of such “project coordinators” as the aforementioned thinkers was to liberate humanity from superstition and reestablish a philosophy and civilization on rational inquiry, empirical evidence and scientific discovery.⁹² This was not an entirely negative aspiration as it was not necessarily the intent of Enlightenment thinkers to remove God from society, yet the pernicious effects of their divulged thoughts within society arose through a cause and effect progression over time. Groothuis notes, “Enlightenment thinkers did not entirely reject belief in God but replaced Christian

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theism with deism - belief in a Creator without revelation or providence or incarnation-but this evisceration of theism naturally led to naturalism. God readily went from being once removed to being absent entirely.‖

Within the progression from Christendom to secularism, and Enlightenment thought to the modern era, a new generation of thinkers emerged. Though merely building on the thought of those who preceded them, individuals such as Immanuel Kant (1724-1804), G.W.F. Hegel (1770-1831) and Charles Darwin (1809-1882) all continued to facilitate a move away from a God permeated society towards the secular. In his 1793 work *Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone* Kant clearly portrays the emerging thought of Enlightenment thinkers and that of the modern era. Kant suggests, “True religion is to consist not in the knowing or considering of what God does or has done for our salvation but in what we must do to become worthy of it . . . and of whose necessity every man can become wholly certain without any Scriptural learning whatever.”

Further, Kant supports his secular belief in noting, “Man himself must make or have made himself into whatever, in a moral sense, whether good or evil, he is or is to become.” Thus, one finds in Enlightenment thought a move away from God and divine revelation towards man and the human potential.

Speaking towards the onset of rationalism and the human potential movement in Enlightenment society, Noll states, “A new sense of the self as God-like in heroic

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95 Ibid.
potential captured the imagination of more and more influential Europeans.”

Additionally, Noll suggests that “a sense of human boundlessness flourished” in English Romantic poets and other influential writers such as Goethe, not to mention musical talents such as Beethoven, Wagner and other cultural influencers of the day.

Author Douglas Groothuis suggests that the Enlightenment project and resultant secular thought emphasized rationalism and objective reality. Groothuis comments, “The Enlightenment project . . . took as axiomatic that there was only one possible answer to any question. From this it followed that the world could be controlled and rationally ordered if we could only picture and represent it rightly.” In light of this Groothuis is quick to concurrently note that this line of thinking “presumed that there existed a single correct mode of representation which, if we could uncover it (and this was what scientific and mathematical endeavors were all about), would provide the means to Enlightenment ends,” yet time has shown this may not ultimately be the case.

As the rule of reason emerged from Enlightenment thought so did the fundamental principles of autonomy, and pre-established harmony. All of these factors severely influenced the thought and action of the modern world, and as Walker et al. suggest, they “conditioned the atmosphere into which Christianity moved.”

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97 Ibid.


99 Ibid.

thought and practice caused a majority to assume a casual attitude towards the faith. As the Roman Empire dissolved and the sovereign Nation State came into existence, society was no longer unified in its belief system and subsequently free to embrace the emerging Enlightenment thought. Marty comments, “Not all common people of Europe raged against God, Church, and doctrine. Many of them found that these simply no longer helped them construe reality in the way they had served their fathers. The industrial age numbered millions who found the church unable to adapt, who found it pointless.”

A Response to Secularization

It is the prevailing attitude of society towards the church and God that is most unsettling during this modern era. Secularism has completely overtaken Western society and threatens to ensnare the rest of the world through the process of globalization and the global community. God is no longer regarded by the general population as Creator, Sovereign or even necessarily pertinent in many cases. Though God created all things for His ultimate glory, secularism has removed God from society and placed Him in a specified location within society, namely, the church. Thus, whereas society throughout Christendom may have only practiced a nominal faith in Christ, the worldview by which individual’s interpreted life was largely Christian. This is of major concern to this writer as society may still practice a nominal faith in Christ today, yet a Christian worldview has largely been replaced by the secular. The implications of this transition are astronomical.


as one considers life both within and outside of the church. Outside of the church the non-believer interprets life through secular lenses as one would assume, yet this prevailing secular worldview has been enabled to permeate the walls of the church and now affect believers as well.

In response to secularism, the world does not need to return to Christendom, but instead to return to the theory that was at some level enmeshed within Christendom. The church must set out to return to a worldview that affirms the biblical notion that God should pervade, motivate and subsume all of life, both within the church and throughout ones daily routine. A corporate return to this ancient belief by the church, and the subsequent practice of that belief within society will serve to deconstruct secularism in the church and allow for the gospel of Jesus Christ to be more vehemently proclaimed to the non-believing world outside of the church.

**Globalization and its Implications towards the Church and Secularism**

Given the aforementioned ramifications of the process of secularization within Western society it becomes necessary to consider the process of globalization and its implications towards the church and secularism. Globalization is a difficult process to define. Author Alex MacGillivray suggests that there is currently no standardized definition of globalization that is universally accepted. World leaders, scholars and economists all seem to define the sociological phenomenon which is globalization in a differing way. Speaking towards the variance within the way notable world leaders have defined globalization, MacGillivray notes, “For Bill Clinton globalization was the ‘world without walls’”. Tony Blair says it is ‘inevitable and irresistible’. George W. Bush calls it
the ‘ties of trade and trust.’ . . . And Ex-World Bank economist Joseph Stiglitz focuses even more specifically on ‘the removal of barriers to free trade and the closer integration of national economies.’”

While it seems that manifold definitions for globalization have been proposed, MacGillivray comments that the apparent ambiguity denotes the “genuine uncertainty” about what is occurring as a result of globalization.

Given the ambiguity that encompasses globalization and the uncertainty it creates, any number of factors may be involved in or affected by globalization. For example, politics is a major concern as it relates to globalization. Specific issues such as international governance, the future of local democracy and other political entities are being considered. Beyond political influence, globalization affects business, as new global markets and accompanying ideologies emerge continually emerge. Issues such as pop music, sport, religion and a plethora of other social concerns such as


104 Ibid., 6.


109 Alex Seago, Where hamburgers sizzle on an open grill night and day (?) Global pop music and Americanization in the year 2000 American Studies 41 (2/3), pp. 119-136.


terrorism, global crime, global sex, and poverty and inequality all relate to globalization. In addition, the Internet and the emergence of the global divide must be considered as they relate to globalization. All of these issues and many more are connected to globalization in this modern era. Yet, the ways in which globalization affects each of these issues and the more widespread implications of its effects are debatable.

Commenting on the ongoing debate and nebulous nature of globalization as it pertains to popular definition, author Joseph Stiglitz remarks, “What is this phenomenon of globalization that has been subject, at the same time, to such vilification and such praise? Fundamentally, it is the closer integration of the countries and peoples of the world which have been brought about by the enormous reduction of costs of transportation and communication, and the breaking down of artificial barriers to the flows of goods, services, capital, knowledge, and (to a lesser extent) people across borders.” Yet, Pulitzer Prize-winning foreign affairs columnist Thomas Friedman does not highlight integration and a global community as much as he suggests globalization to

112 Roger Scruton, The West and the rest: Globalization and the terrorist threat (Wilmington, DE: Intercollegiate Studies Institute, 2002).


114 Dennis Altman, Global Sex (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001).


be defined by globally available “free-market capitalism.”\textsuperscript{119} Friedman notes, “The driving idea behind globalization is free-market capitalism—the more you let market forces rule and the more you open your economy to free trade and competition, the more efficient and flourishing your economy will be. Globalization means the spread of free-market capitalism to virtually every country in the world.”\textsuperscript{120}

Based on research conducted in December 2004 on amazon.com, amazon.co.uk, amazon.fr and amazon.de, MacGillivray suggests there to be over 3,300 books in English pertaining to globalization; 700 French titles; 670 German titles, and hundreds of others in languages spanning Russian to Arabic.\textsuperscript{121} In total, MacGillvray’s research suggests there to be over 5,000 titles on globalization in print.\textsuperscript{122} Given the popularity of this sociological entity and the ambiguity that surrounds it, one would do well to spend less time towards the defining of the process, but rather seek to identify its implications as they pertain to specific aspects of society.

Globalization is defined as, “To make global in scope or application.”\textsuperscript{123} While aforementioned aspects of society such as politics, business, music, sport, terrorism, crime, sex, poverty and inequality are all affected by, and potentially affect globalization, this study will now focus primarily on the specific implications globalization has towards the church and secularization within this modern era.


\textsuperscript{120} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{121} Alex MacGillivray, \textit{A Brief History of Globalization} (New York: Carroll & Graf Publishers, 2006), 1.

\textsuperscript{122} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{123} \textit{American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language}, 4\textsuperscript{th} edition.
First, it must be foundationally noted that the process of globalization has effectually served the purposes of secularization, yet globalization does not serve secularization exclusively. While globalization has aided the proliferation of secularism globally, it could just as easily be utilized to counter, and even reverse the process of secularization. A fundamental element of secular thought pertains to the human potential movement and human boundlessness. From the belief that man has all potential for success or failure within himself comes the practice of autonomy within society. Interestingly, globalization has promoted integration and the creation of a global community which inherently opposes the autonomy of secular thought. Thus, in theory, globalization potentially serves to deconstruct aspects of secularism by its very nature.

While globalization has both served the proliferation of secularism and served to deconstruct elements of secularism simultaneously, the church is afforded a unique opportunity to utilize the process of globalization for the further deconstruction of secularism. Globalization has already served the church in its proliferation of the gospel through the Internet, media and the increased opportunity for missionary influence, yet in many respects the church has allowed itself to utilize the process of globalization while being confined to a secular worldview towards its potential. While the church has been proliferated through globalization it operates as an insular entity within the communities it has been placed. The reality of this occurrence begs the question, “How should the church respond to secularization in the wake of globalization?”
The process of globalization has influenced society-at-large. While its effects are difficult to quantitatively measure, its influence is difficult to deny. One by-product of globalization is what authors Ed Stetzer and David Putnam call “the emerging glocal context. Stetzer and Putnam suggest a glocal context to be “the convergence of the global reality with [our] local reality . . . thus . . . people no longer think just locally; they think glocally.”\footnote{Ed Stetzer and David Putnam, \textit{Breaking the missional Code: Your Church Can Become a Missionary in Your Community} (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2006), 5.} Author George Ritzer suggests the glocal to be overtaking the local globally. Ritzer notes, “The local, at least in the sense of anything that is purely local, is fast disappearing from the world scene.”\footnote{George Ritzer, \textit{The Globalization of Nothing} (Thousand Oaks, CA: Pine Forge Press, 2004), 110.} Ritzer goes on to suggest that the glocal overtaking of all that is “purely local” drastically affects global cultural diversity.\footnote{Ibid.} Thus, we find the deconstruction of what formerly represented global cultural diversity and the replacement of a new form of global cultural diversity – glocal diversity.

In light of the emerging glocal context and the societal shift from modernity to postmodernity, the church must respond. Whereas the church of the modern era largely promoted programs with the intent of attracting non-believers to the church, a “come-and-see” mentality; the 21st century church must adopt a more proactive strategy in its attempt to deconstruct rampant global secularism. Author Reggie McNeal suggests, “The appropriate response to the emerging world is a rebooting of the mission, a radical obedience to an ancient command, a loss of self rather than self-preoccupation, concern
about service and sacrifice rather than concern about style.”\(^{127}\) If the people of this modern era won’t come into the church it is the belief of this writer that the church must go to where the people are. This is not to suggest that the church should become what the people are, but simply to state the necessity for God’s people to look proactively for opportunity in which to engage society in a relevant and effective way. Whereas spiritually interested individuals of the past may have autonomously engaged the church, society now necessitates the church engaging culture.

The question must be asked: What can or must change, and what must never change? In response to this question, authors Elmer Towns and Ed Stetzer suggest that methods change but the message must never change. Towns and Stetzer note, “Our call is to take the never-changing message into an ever-changing world. Our task is to be living incarnations of this message in a new culture and place.”\(^{128}\) In light of the “ever-changing” world that the church finds itself within, the potential of the church to fulfill the mission of the church is largely dependant on the church’s ability to adapt, rethink and reboot its methodology. Author David Watson suggests, “Everything depends on our ability to catch a new vision of the church as it ought to be, on our willingness to change where necessary, and above all on our determination to keep our lives continually open to spiritual renewal.”\(^{129}\)

The emerging generation is growing up in a spiritual climate not only suggested to be “postmodern,” but also “post-Christian.” In light of this, the church must consider

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its methods towards the engagement and successful communication of the gospel within this given social climate. Authors Aubrey and Michael Malphurs warn, “If we don’t adapt our methods to meet the needs of emerging generations, in time we’ll have no younger generation in the church. No youth means no future.”

While culture necessitates a change in church methodology, change will only occur when the church is willing to see culture as it really is, and then sees itself as the chief agent of potential change within culture. McNeal suggests the church must undergo a radical paradigm shift from the prevalent church thinking to what he refers to as “Kingdom thinking.” McNeal suggests that Kingdom thinking will challenge church thinking in that Kingdom thinking will not “force people into the church to hear about Jesus or maintain that church membership is the same thing as kingdom citizenship.”

McNeal continues noting:

Kingdom theology also will force us to reexamine our strategy for penetrating the culture with the presence of the church. In the church age, cultural presence has largely depended on church real estate. People had to come “inside” the church to participate in Christian worship, to observe Christian sacraments, to hear Scripture, to “join” the church. In the emerging future this “come and get it!” approach will yield to another strategy. Jesus’ strategy was to go where the people were already hanging out.

In the wake of globalization and the emerging glocal context, the church should respond to secularism through a return to Jesus’ incarnational strategy for ministry.

Theologian Paul Enns suggests the word “incarnation” to mean “in flesh.” Enns notes,

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130 Aubrey Malphurs and Michael Malphurs, Church Next (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 2003), 35.


132 Ibid.

133 Ibid.
“The incarnation . . . denotes the act whereby the eternal Son of God took to Himself an additional nature, humanity, through the virgin birth. The result is that Christ remains forever unblemished deity, which He has had from eternity past; but He also possesses true, sinless humanity in one person forever.”¹³⁴ Theologian James Montgomery Boice suggests five major reasons for the incarnation of Christ; it reveals the value set by God upon human life, indicates that God has not abandoned his creation despite its fallen state, shows God is able to understand and sympathize with His creation, gives an example of how a person should live in this world, and most important, offers man reconciliation to God.¹³⁵ Noting Boice’s suggestion that one significant factor within the incarnation of Jesus was to provide an example of how people should live in this world in conjunction with 1 Peter 2:21, “Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps,” it is concluded that a missionary God sent His son to enter humanity to save humanity from its fallen state, so He now sends the church to humanity as well. Author Mark Mittelberg suggests God to be a “missionary God” in light of the incarnation of Christ, thus he notes, “Just as God is a missionary God, so the church is to be a missionary church.”¹³⁶

While the church of the 21st century should respond to secularism in the wake of globalization through a return to Jesus’ incarnational strategy for ministry, an assessment of the current climate might suggest the church to be failing. Author Joseph Aldrich comments, “I think it is fair to say that the majority of Christians have lost their ability to


¹³⁶ Mark Mittelberg, Building a Contagious Church (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001), 34.
relate significantly to non-Christians.” As a result of the insular attitude created within modernity, the church has drastically limited its potential significance within this postmodern society. Aldrich continues as he notes, “By no stretch of the imagination can the Christian community be called the “salt of the earth.” For salt to be effective, it must get out of its container and into the world of hurting, dying, suffering, sinning people. There is no impact without contact. . .” Thus, the church must look outside of its four walls towards the potential impact it might have through contact with the world in their arena.

Author Neil Cole remarks, “The Great Commission says that we are to “go into all the world,” but we’ve turned the whole thing around and made it “come to us and hear our message.” He continues by suggesting, “The heart of our message is that God didn’t expect us to come to Him in heaven. He came to us. He lived life on our terms and on our turf. He became incarnate.” Just as Jesus Christ was willing to become incarnate and “live life on our terms,” it is the belief of this writer that the church has been called to go into the world and live life on their terms. While Jesus entered humanity and “took on flesh” he did not take on the sin that befalls the rest of humanity. Thus, Jesus was in the world but not of the world just as He calls the church to be.

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137 Josheph C. Aldrich, Life-Style Evangelism: Crossing Traditional Boundaries to Reach the Unbelieving World (Portland, OR: Multnomah Press, 1981), 19.
138 Ibid.
140 Ibid., xxvii.
141 2 Corinthians 10:3
Author Charles Van Engen suggests that the work and role of Jesus Christ were set as a pattern for the church in the world.\textsuperscript{142} Van Engen notes that the church’s “transferred apostolate” were fully assumed by the disciples following Pentecost. Van Engen comments, “The disciples proclaimed the truth in word and demonstrated it in deed, doing the same kinds of works which Jesus had done . . . and . . . Paul seemed to consider it entirely appropriate to apply to himself and his companions the language that up until then had been reserved for the mission of the Messiah.”\textsuperscript{143} It is then noted that just as Jesus left a pattern of incarnational ministry, so the early disciples followed and left the church to follow as well.

A problem arises for the church as it considers a shift from an attractional model of ministry to an incarnational model. Throughout modernity the church stood its ground against secular philosophy and the prevalent thought of that era. Yet, throughout that process it may have become the case that the church became more concerned about the church, rather than what the church might do in the world. Commenting on an incarnational model of church, Stetzer and Putnam note:

A church that is incarnational is interested more in the harvest than in the barn. For too long, the church has focused on getting the grain into the barn. We have made sure the barn is clean, made sure it is attractive, made sure it is well organized, and then, we assumed that the grains of wheat would make their way in if we invited them. Some did – but most people who could be reached that way already have been. Now, it is our job to move the church from solely attractional methods also to engage in missional ones.\textsuperscript{144}

\textsuperscript{142} Charles Van Engen, \textit{God’s Missionary People: Rethinking the Purpose of the Local Church} (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1991).

\textsuperscript{143} Ibid., 120.

\textsuperscript{144} Ed Stetzer and David Putnam, \textit{Breaking the Missional Code: Your Church Can Become a Missionary in Your Community} (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2006), 65.
As the church seeks to deconstruct secularism in the wake of globalization it must acknowledge its true missionary nature and calling. Rather than primarily looking to “tend the barn,” the church must seek to take Christ to the people. This being the case, several authors suggest the church of North America to be suffering from “mission amnesia.” In particular, McNeal comments, “The church was created to be the people of God to join him in his redemptive mission in the world. The church was never intended to exist for itself. It was and is the chosen instrument of God to expand his kingdom.”¹⁴⁵ Similarly, Stetzer and Putnam suggest, “The church is one of the few organizations in the world that does not exist for the benefit of its members.”¹⁴⁶ Stetzer and Putnam go on to suggest, “The church exists because God, in his infinite wisdom and infinite mercy, chose the church as his instrument to make known his manifold wisdom in the world.”¹⁴⁷ The church, then, cannot measure its success by the seats filled in the church but the influence it has on the streets, within society.

The church must respond to secularism in the wake of globalization by creating missionaries rather than ministers. This concept was discussed in chapter one and suggests that rather than creating a culture whereby the church members are equipped to minister within the church, the church must now seek to empower people to become missionaries outside of the church; missionaries in all walks of life. McNeal suggests that the church has been failing in this endeavor. McNeal notes, “We have failed to call


¹⁴⁶ Ed Stetzer and David Putnam, Breaking the Missional Code: Your Church Can Become a Missionary in Your Community (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2006), 44.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.
people out to their true potential as God’s priests in the world.”\textsuperscript{148} Thus, the church must seek to join God in His redemptive mission within the world as it empowers its members to become missionaries wherever they might be. Stetzer and Putnam suggest, “If we are going to join God on his mission, we have to recognize that we are missionaries . . . wherever he places us – just like the first disciples.”\textsuperscript{149}

As the church responds to secularism in the wake of globalization by creating a missionary culture it must release its members to engage culture beyond the walls of the church. While this may be uncomfortable for many, the church has been commissioned to a process of “going” into the entire world to make disciples\textsuperscript{150} of all people. Speaking towards the apprehension 21\textsuperscript{st} century North American Christians might have regarding the engagement of culture, Stetzer and Putnam comment:

Before criticizing the escapist tendency of many Christians in America toward culture, we must confess that engaging culture is not an easy task. Engaging culture requires that we leave what is customary and comfortable, taking a journey of faith that we are not capable of making on our own. Engaging culture often means engaging without cultures, entering into commitments – and even disputes – with those who have a different way of living. The very word engage, as we are used to hearing it, has connotations that often make us apprehensive, whether it’s in the context of an approaching marriage or conflict with an enemy. Engagement is an act of commitment that could end badly, were it not for the faithfulness of God.\textsuperscript{151}


\textsuperscript{149} Ed Stetzer and David Putnam, Breaking the Missional Code: Your Church Can Become a Missionary in Your Community (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2006), 3.

\textsuperscript{150} Matthew 28:18-20

Regardless of the apprehension one might feel towards engaging culture, the church has been commissioned to go into the entire world under the authority of Jesus Christ,\textsuperscript{152} and with the confidence that He goes as well.\textsuperscript{153}

Having concluded that the church is commissioned to take the gospel into the world following the pattern of incarnational ministry set by Jesus Christ, and then the disciples, specific strategies or methods must be developed in order to engage specific cultures effectively. Aldrich suggests that the most effective way to reach people with the gospel message is to intentionally engage people through cultural similarity.\textsuperscript{154} Aldrich notes, “It’s generally true that the more shared educationally, ethnically, vocationally, economically, and socially with a nonbeliever, the easier he will be to reach.”\textsuperscript{155} In light of this suggestion, this writer believes that the church must empower its members to minister in the cultures they most consociate with. As suggested by Aldrich, one might consociate through shared educational background, ethnicity, vocation or economic position, yet it is noted that one can also consociate through shared interests such as music, entertainment, the arts and sport. Given this reality, it is pertinent to look at a specific medium through which the church can seek to deconstruct secularism in the wake of globalization. For the purposes of this study the sport of soccer will be specifically addressed as one potential medium through which the church can seek to deconstruct secularism in the wake of globalization.

\textsuperscript{152} Matthew 28:18
\textsuperscript{153} Matthew 28:20
\textsuperscript{154} Joseph C. Aldrich, Life-Style Evangelism: Crossing Traditional Boundaries to Reach the Unbelieving World (Portland, OR: Multnomah Press, 1981).
\textsuperscript{155} Joseph C. Aldrich, Life-Style Evangelism: Crossing Traditional Boundaries to Reach the Unbelieving World (Portland, OR: Multnomah Press, 1981), 72.
Soccer Ministry: One of the Church’s Specific Responses to Secularism in the Wake of Globalization

Given the current social climate of Western society and the rampant secularism that characterizes this society, the church of the 21st century must proactively seek to reverse the effects of secularism by empowering its members to become missionaries in all walks of life. One potential response to secularism in the wake of globalization is the intentional use of sport as a vehicle of the church for Kingdom purposes. As sport has been suggested to be “morally neutral,”¹⁵⁶ neither sacred nor secular, the church is afforded the opportunity to utilize sport as one potential medium to engage culture.

It has been aforementioned within this study that if the church desires to deconstruct secularism within society it must move beyond the church building into the lives and places where people dwell. Author Bob Briner notes, “Instead of hanging around the fringes of our culture, we need to be right smack dab in the middle of it.”¹⁵⁷ In light of this, author John Garner suggests the church must adopt a strategy of intentionality.¹⁵⁸ This concept speaks towards a greater deliberateness and determination by the church to reach the unbelieving population of this world, given the specific social climate governing culture. Garner notes, “We live in a culture that is unseeded with the Word of God. People do not know the Word of God, have not read the Word of God, and are afraid of the Word of God . . . Many, if not most, of the genX population know

¹⁵⁶ Lowrie McCown and Valerie J. Gin, Focus On Sport In Ministry (Marietta, GA: 360 sports, 2003). This concept will be discussed in detail within chapter three of this study.


practically nothing about it.” \textsuperscript{159} Thus, as emerging generations mature void of a Christian worldview and knowledge of the Word of God the church must intentionally respond.

The Global Sport Phenomenon

As noted, one potential response to secularism involves the church engaging sport as a vehicle to engage culture. Sport has the potential to serve as an extremely effective vehicle for the church to engage culture in light of its global popularity. Author Stuart Weir notes:

Sports stars are heroes of the nation, we are fascinated by every aspect of their lives. By the millions we congregate in arenas and stadia to cheer them to victory. By the tens of millions we watch them on television. Their professional and private lives are chronicled in newspapers, magazines, on radio and television. Business loves them, because through their visibility and influence they can sell us products ranging from razors to racing cars, breakfast cereals to window frames. We admire their skill. We use the boots, trainers, clubs, racquets, balls and bats they use. We even wear the replica shirt with their name on the back. We buy the designer clothes they promote. When they speak, we listen. They are examples and role models to millions. \textsuperscript{160}

In many respects, sport and its heroes have unfortunately replaced Christianity as the most popular religion of Western society. Author Harry Edwards notes, “If there is a universal popular religion in America it is to be found within the institution of sport.” \textsuperscript{161} While this is a sad reality its validity is difficult to question. Speaking towards the reality of the global sport phenomenon, Weir comments, “The largest people group in the world is the one that watches, reads about and participates in sport and recreation.” \textsuperscript{162} Similarly,

\textsuperscript{159} Ibid., 7.


\textsuperscript{161} Harry Edwards, “Desegregating Sexist Sport,” \textit{Intellectual Digest} 3 (November 1972): 82.

author Bryan Mason suggest the “world” spoken of by Jesus within the Great Commission\textsuperscript{163} fully encompasses the people of sport. Mason notes, “In this ‘world’ that Jesus speaks of, we find sport and recreation figuring prominently and being responsible for the composition of the largest people group across the globe, where language, creed and culture loose their divisive tendencies.”\textsuperscript{164} The 1993 Nobel Peace Prize winner and former President of South Africa, Nelson Mandela understands the global popularity and significance of sport. Mandela states: “Sport has the power to unite people in a way little else can. It breaks down racial barriers, it laughs in the face of all kinds of discrimination. Sport speaks to people in a language they can understand.”\textsuperscript{165}

As popular as sport is, no sport compares to the global popularity of soccer. The \textit{Fédération Internationale de Football Association} (FIFA), reports that television coverage of the 2002 World Cup reached 213 countries, with over 41,100 hours of dedicated programming over the 25 match days.\textsuperscript{166} While viewing was down from the 1998 World Cup due to the introduction of audited audience measurement in China, over 28.8 billion people watch the event; 1.1 billion watching the final alone.\textsuperscript{167} Speaking towards the global popularity of soccer, author Fernando Fiore comments, “Is there

\textsuperscript{163} Matthew 28:19


\textsuperscript{165} Quoted from the unpublished work of Jon Hamilton entitled, “Why Sports Ministry?”

\textsuperscript{166} Available from http://www.fifa.com/en/marketing/newmedia/index/0,3509,10,00.html; Internet; accessed 06 July 2006.

\textsuperscript{167} Ibid.
anybody out there who does not grasp the magnitude, transcendence, significance, impact, and influence – economic, social, political, and cultural – of the World Cup?”

Soccer is not only popular but influential as well. Authors Matt Weiland and Sean Wilsey comment, “The joy of being one of the couple of billion people watching thirty two nations abide by seventeen rules fills me with the conviction, perhaps ignorant, but like many ignorant convictions, fiercely held, that soccer can unite the world.” This unification is witnessed through the recent Ghanaian declaration of a national holiday in honor of a 2006 World Cup Victory, and the cessation of a nearly twenty-year civil war in the Ivory Coast in light of the nation’s qualification for the Cup.

The 2006 FIFA World Cup was sponsored by Adidas. Throughout the Cup Adidas ran an advertising campaign with the slogan, “One Game Changes Everything.” The advertising campaign suggested that soccer “closes shops; closes the schools; closes a city; stops a war; fuels a nation; breaks the boarders; builds a hero; crushes a dream; answers a prayer; and changes the world.” As the world has recognized soccer’s global popularity and potential for impact, so must the church that seeks to engage culture with the intention towards the deconstruction of secularism.

Soccer’s global popularity has often been compared to religion. Many suggest that soccer is a religion on its own, or more popular than most organized religions of the world. Author Franklin Foer notes, “Of course, soccer isn’t the same as Bach or Buddhism. But it is often more deeply felt than religion, and just as much a part of the

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community’s fabric, a repository of traditions.”

Weiland and Wilsey comment, “Soccer’s worldwide popularity isn’t surprising when you look at what has always motivated humanity: money and God. There’s lots of money in soccer; of course. . . But God’s there too.”

Weiland and Wilsey pose the question, “What is soccer if not everything that religion should be?” They note that soccer is “universal yet particular; the source of an infinitely renewable supply of hope, occasionally miraculous and governed by simple, uncontradictory rules (“Laws,” officially) that everyone can follow.”

They conclude, “Unlike God’s Commandments or Allah’s Shari’a, soccer’s Laws are all laws of equality and nonviolence and restraint, and all free to be delayed in their application or even reinterpreted at the discretion of a reasonable arbiter.” In light of this, the church must now recognize the potential of vehicle’s such as soccer and purposefully intention to utilize them for Kingdom purposes.

Why Soccer Ministry?

Given the global popularity of soccer and the need for the church to engage culture in an effort to deconstruct secularism, the church must seek to engage soccer. Beyond soccer’s global appeal it has been suggested (chapter one) that the use of soccer is biblical. While the bible makes very few references to sport specifically, several principles emerge as a sound biblical basis for the use of soccer in and for ministry. As previously noted (chapter one), twelve principles comprise a biblical basis for the use of

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173 Ibid.

174 Ibid.
soccer in and for ministry. The twelve principles and their corresponding Scriptural references are as follows:

1. Longevity Principle (2 Timothy 3:10 – 4:8)
2. Silence Principle (Hebrews 12 and 1 Corinthians 9)
3. Creation Principle (Genesis 1:24-28)
4. Stewardship Principle (Exodus 35:4-35)
5. Worship Principle (Deuteronomy)
7. Newness Principle (Psalms and Isaiah)
8. Sacrifice Principle (Romans 12)
9. Foolish Principle (1 Corinthians 1:18-31)
10. Liberty Principle (1 Corinthians 9:1-23)
11. Reconciliation Principle (2 Corinthians 5:11-21)
12. Church Growth Principle (Ephesians 4:1-16)\textsuperscript{175}

In addition to the biblical basis for the use of soccer in and for ministry, soccer is relevant to culture. The relevance of soccer is seen in its global popularity and appeal. As a result of soccer’s relevance it also serves as a universal language that transcends economic, racial, social, political, linguistic and religious barriers as it serves as a vehicle for the gospel in and to culture. Dr. Eddie Fox of United Methodist World Missions comments, “Just as the roads of Rome were utilized as bridges for the Gospel to the ancient world, so sports, in this era, provide unique intersections in the world for the witness of Christ.”\textsuperscript{176} Similarly, Mason notes, “Sport, like music, is a universal language that transcends barriers of creed, class and culture. It allows the Christian sportsman and woman to role-model the gospel in any and every situation.”\textsuperscript{177}

\textsuperscript{175} David Oakley’s biblical basis for sports ministry can be viewed in its entirety within Appendix A.

\textsuperscript{176} Quoted from the unpublished work of Jon Hamilton entitled, “Why Sports Ministry?”

\textsuperscript{177} Bryan Mason, Into the Stadium: An active guide to sport and recreation ministry in the local church (Waynesboro, GA: Spring Harvest Publishing, 2003), 42.
The Church Incarnating Soccer

It was stated within that in the wake of globalization and the emerging glocal context, this writer believes the church must respond to secularism through a return to Jesus’ incarnational strategy for ministry. Jesus’ incarnational strategy is seen in part through John 1:1 and 14, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God . . . The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us.” Just as Jesus Christ “became flesh” and incarnated humanity, so the church must incarnate the various subcultures within society today.

While there are almost 200 countries recognized by the United Nations, there are any number of people groups and cultures that comprise each country. As soccer serves as a universal “touch point” or medium between the church and culture, the church must seek to incarnate soccer in its effort to deconstruct secularism. McCown comments, “Just as “the Word became flesh and dwelt among us,” we, too, can dwell among the people of sport, thus bringing the presence of Christ in sport.” To incarnate soccer is then to “bring the presence of Christ” in soccer.

Speaking towards Jesus’ incarnational model of ministry and the potential to influence select subcultures within society, Weir states:

Think how Jesus operated. The people saw him at work in the temple, kicking over the money-changers’ tables. They saw his miracles at Cana in Galilee. They watched him and then they were ready to ask him questions. The people who are going to hear the message from you also need to see the message in you. And they will see the message in you by belonging to the same culture that you belong to.

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178 Lowrie McCown and Valerie J. Gin, Focus On Sport In Ministry (Marietta, GA: 360 sports, 2003), 30.

In light of Weir’s suggestion regarding the potential reception of the gospel message through shared cultural belonging, the church must envision and empower its soccer culture to incarnate the soccer culture of the world. Mason suggests, “For society to be transformed by the Word of God it has to be first of all penetrated by the people of God.”

The church has clearly been called to be “salt and light” in the world, as witnesses of Jesus Christ. Acts 1:8 states, “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” Commenting on the Christian sportsperson as a witness in sport, Weir notes, “If you are a Christian who loves sport, who spends much of life playing sport, if you are thoroughly at home in the clubhouse bar or with the dressing room banter, then does it not follow that this is the world where you are likely to be an effective witness?” Weir concludes that for the sportsperson (i.e. soccer person), the subculture of sport (soccer) is not merely included in Acts 1:8, but for the Christian sportsperson (soccer person) sport (soccer) is their “Jerusalem.” Thus, the incarnational strategy in soccer is simple as it only requires the Christian soccer person to

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181 Matthew 5:13-14


183 Ibid.
be themselves; Weir calls this a “Christian ministry of presence” characterized by simply “being.”\textsuperscript{184}

As the church incarnates soccer four potential areas of ministry surface; ministry to the people of sport, ministry through the people of sport, ministry in the activity of sport and ministry through service in sport and through sport activity.\textsuperscript{185} Through the engagement of each of these ministry opportunities the church is afforded liberty to further engage culture through soccer, thus leading to the potential deconstruction of secularism through its efforts.

**Summary**

Throughout this chapter this writer has attempted to consider literature pertaining to the potential deconstruction of secularism through the globalization of soccer in conjunction with a biblical worldview. As the early church and the influence of Constantine were reviewed, it was suggested that Constantine inaugurated Christendom which resulted in the proliferation of Christianity on a global scale, and the general adoption of a Christian worldview from the 4\textsuperscript{th} century until the 18\textsuperscript{th} century. The consequences of the ideas of 18\textsuperscript{th} century scientists and philosophers was suggested to have led to the rise of secularization, and globalization and its implications within the 21\textsuperscript{st} century were considered.

In addition, it was suggested that the process of secularization has removed God from society and compartmentalized the church, while globalization was suggested to be

\textsuperscript{184} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{185} This concept is discussed in Lowrie McCown and Valerie J. Gin, *Focus On Sport In Ministry* (Marietta, GA: 360 sports, 2003), 133-137.
a potential agent of both secularization and the church depending on how it is approached. In the wake of globalization it was suggested that the church respond to secularism through a return to a worldview that affirms the biblical notion that God should pervade, motivate and subsume all of life, both within the church and throughout one’s daily routine. Finally, it was suggested that soccer ministry relates to the church’s response to secularism in the wake of globalization through intentionally empowering the soccer culture of the church to engage the soccer culture of the world.

Chapter three of this study will examine the conceptual and theological impetus for Professional Soccer Ministries.
CHAPTER THREE

CONCEPTUAL AND THEOLOGICAL IMPETUS FOR PROFESSIONAL SOCCER MINISTRIES

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to examine the conceptual and theological impetus for Professional Soccer Ministries. The purpose of this chapter is not to discuss the pragmatic outworking of the ministry, but rather to focus on a discussion of the foundational principles on which it is built. While the conceptual and theological impetus for Professional Soccer Ministries will be discussed throughout the five sections of this chapter, a series of four accompanying illustrations will be provided. The illustrations will serve to contribute visual assistance throughout this chapter.

Conceptual and Theological Overview

Professional Soccer Ministries is founded on the biblical principle that the chief end for which man was created is the glory of God.\textsuperscript{186} Yet, it is concurrently acknowledged that man is born into sin as a result of Adam’s original sin.\textsuperscript{187} The synchronicity of the chief end for which man was created and the ramifications of original sin present a quandary that must be addressed if one is to obtain a biblical worldview.

\textsuperscript{186} 1 Corinthians 10:31; Colossians 3:17; Philippians 2:11 and Isaiah 43:6-7.

\textsuperscript{187} Romans 5:15-19; 1 Corinthians 15:22; Ephesians 2:1; Romans 3:23 and 6:23.
Illustration 3.1 depicts three distinct and characteristically different lives potentially concurrently occurring in this modern era. Each of these lives will be individually addressed within the following sections of this chapter, yet it is important to preface any discourse given towards the specific examination of these lives with a general discussion of a worldview.

The Merriam-Webster Dictionary notes the English word “worldview” to have originated from the German words “welt” or “world” and “Anschauung” or “view.” A worldview is defined as, “A comprehensive conception or apprehension of the world especially from a specific standpoint.” The American Heritage Dictionary of the

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189 Ibid., 1421.
English Language defines a worldview as, “The overall perspective from which one sees and interprets the world,” and/or, “A collection of beliefs about life and the universe held by an individual or group.”

While one’s worldview is rarely discussed and few sermons address the concept directly, a biblical worldview is essential to the Christian life and the potential deconstruction of secularism, both in the Church and in society. Each of the three lives depicted in illustration 3.1 represent a differing worldview, though each life is nearly identical in all respects. Given the identical nature of each life, one may be prone to assume a similar lifestyle to result from each life, yet this is simply not the case. Each of the three differing worldviews (i.e. perspectives from which one sees and interprets the world) produces a very different result in terms of the pragmatic outworking of one’s life and lifestyle. Commenting on the lenses through which certain individuals see the world and their surroundings, author Os Guinness notes, “Marxists interpret us by categories of class, Freudians by childhood neuroses, feminists by gender, and pop-commentators of all sorts by generational profiles – such as the “silent generation,” the ‘baby boomers,” the Generation Xers.” And so it goes.”

Guinness’ thesis is that an individual’s worldview not only influences, but often defines reality and the way an individual interprets all things. If an individual’s worldview does in fact influence, and/or define what reality in one’s life becomes, a biblical worldview must be explored. Yet, in order to understand a biblical worldview fully, a non-biblical worldview must first be considered.

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Sin and a Secularized Worldview: *Life 1*

Illustration 3.2 represents a life characterized by sin and a non-biblical worldview. It depicts one potential life occurring in the modern era, this life will be called “*Life 1*” for the purposes of this discourse. As *Life 1* is characterized by sin and a non-biblical worldview, it must first be noted that *Life 1* consists of people, activities and objectives such as jobs, hobbies, sports, family, friends and sex. While *Life 1* consists of people, activities and objectives of this nature, it is not limited to or inclusive of these things. Rather, these people, activities and objectives are representative of potential elements of any given life, as they will be shown to be transferable within each of the three lives to be discussed.
As Paul writes to the church in Rome, “All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,”¹⁹² and, “The wages of sin is death.”¹⁹³ So, **Life 1** is characterized by sin and death. 2 Corinthians 4:4 notes, “The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.” Thus, those living within **Life 1** may not be cognizant of their worldview shaped by sin, yet this is the biblical truth for those outside the grace of God. Again, it is noted in 1 Corinthians 15:22 that “in Adam all die,” and Ephesians 2:1-2 speaks of the implications of Adam’s imputed death, as it states, “You were dead in your transgressions and sins, in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient.”

**Life 1** represents the potential worldview of all those who fall outside of the grace of God in this modern era. As a result of “sin” that leads to “death,” those in **Life 1** are incapable of obtaining a biblical worldview. Given their incapability to obtain a biblical worldview, those in **Life 1** have only one choice in regard to their worldview – secular/carnal. Commenting on sin and the necessity of a correct view of sin in relation to one’s worldview, Millard notes:

> Our approach to the problems of society will also be governed by our view of sin. On the one hand, if we feel that humanity is basically good, or, at worst, morally neutral, we will view the problems of society as stemming from an unwholesome environment. Alter the environment, and changes in individual humans and their behavior will follow. If, on the other hand, the problems of society are rooted in radically perverted human minds and wills, then the nature of those individuals will have to be altered, or they will continue to infect the whole.”¹⁹⁴

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¹⁹² Romans 3:23

¹⁹³ Romans 6:23

As it has been previously suggested within this study that all things were inceptively created to be sacred, the result of sin and death in the world have brought about the current reality that not all things are sacred. Given this, secularism must be considered and the ramifications of secularism upon one’s worldview examined in an effort to fully understand Life 1 and potentially progress into Life 2.

One product of modernity within Western society has been the promotion of what Guinness calls “privatization.”195 Guinness defines privatization as, “The process by which modernization produces a change between the public and private spheres of life and reinforces the private sphere as the special arena for individual freedom, fulfillment – and faith.”196 As a result of the infiltration of ideas from such prominent philosophers as John Locke and David Hume, the previously discussed process of secularization was birthed. The process of secularization is effectually the promotion of Guinness’ idea of privatization, which may also be referred to as “compartmentalization.” While the promotion of privatization/compartmentalization by way of the process of secularization may seem enticing because of the potentially perceived freedom resulting from a lifestyle characterized by this process, Guinness cautions, “The results of privatized freedom are limited and limiting. There is unprecedented freedom, but only within the limits of the private sphere.”197 Thus, Life 1 is characterized by sin and a privatized/compartmentalized worldview promoted by the process of secularization in


196 Ibid., 156.

197 Ibid., 156.
response to modernity. Having considered the components of *Life 1* and the subsequent potential worldview found within this life, *Life 2* can now be considered.

**Modernity’s Influence on the Church, a Secularized Worldview: Life 2**

Illustration 3.3 represents a life characterized by a non-biblical worldview. It depicts one potential life occurring in the modern era, this life will be called “*Life 2*” for the purposes of this discourse. As *Life 2* is characterized by a non-biblical worldview, it must be initially noted that *Life 2* consists of people, activities and objectives such as jobs, hobbies, sports, family, friends and sex just as *Life 1* consisted of people, activities
and objectives of the same nature. While the people, activities and objectives are potentially identical within *Life 1* and *Life 2* (i.e. the components of each life are the same), there is one added element within *Life 2* that was not present within *Life 1* – God.

Having acknowledged the characterizing nature of sin and death within *Life 1*, *Life 2* is altogether different because of God’s entrance into the equation of this life. Writing to the church in Rome, Paul states, “But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”\(^{198}\) Having served as an atoning sacrifice\(^ {199}\) and propitiation for man’s sin,\(^ {200}\) Jesus Christ allowed for man to have continuous fellowship with God.\(^ {201}\) While the potential for continuous fellowship with God eradicates sin and death from one’s life, it does not necessarily produce a biblical worldview. This conjecture may seem contradictory, and even offensive to some, yet it must be noted that while the Christ-follower is assuredly forgiven of sin through the aforementioned atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ, this individual is not guaranteed a biblical worldview as a result. Herein lies the problem for many devout and well-intentioned Christ-followers. Having received new life and the opportunity for continuous fellowship with God in the person of Jesus Christ, it is assumed that the way in which one sees life will automatically be transformed into a Christ-centered view of all things. Scripture suggests otherwise.

Writing to the church in Rome, a body comprised of several devout and well-intentioned Christ-followers, Paul admonishes, “Do not conform any longer to the pattern

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\(^{198}\) Romans 5:8

\(^{199}\) Romans 3:24; Galatians 4:4-5 and Colossians 1:14

\(^{200}\) Romans 3:25; Hebrews 2:17; 1 John 2:2 and 4:10

\(^{201}\) 1 Corinthians 1:9 and 1 John 1:3
of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to
test and approve what God’s will is – his good, pleasing and perfect will.” In similar
fashion, Paul writes, “To the saints in Ephesus,” a group of Christ-followers in Asia
Minor who were struggling to identify what the Christian life looked like practically lived
out in a sinful world. Paul states, “You were taught, with regard to your former way of
life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; to be made
new in the attitude of your minds; and to put on the new self, created to be like God in
ture righteousness and holiness.” Within each of these Pauline verses it is apparent
that the Christ-follower is encouraged to actively “be transformed by the renewing of”
one’s mind, and “be made new in the attitude of” one’s mind. Bible scholars J.H.
Walvoord and R.B. Zuck note the Greek verb “metamorphousthe,” is translated
“transformed,” as representative of the English word “metamorphosis.” They write, “The
key to this change is the “mind” (noos), the control center of one’s attitudes, thoughts,
feelings, and actions (Eph. 4:22-23). As one’s mind keeps on being made new by the
spiritual input of God’s Word, prayer, and Christian fellowship, his lifestyle keeps on
being transformed.”

Commenting on Paul’s admonishment to the church in Rome (Romans 12:2),
bible scholar C.S. Keener and InterVarsity Press note, “Jewish wisdom writers and Greek
philosophers could have agreed with Paul’s emphasis on renewing the mind; they

202 Romans 12:2
203 Ephesians 1:1
204 Ephesians 4:22-24
understood that one’s attitudes and values affected one’s lifestyle. But Paul’s basis for renewal is different from theirs; he bases it on the new kind of life available in Christ, which most of Judaism expected only in the world to come. ”

Thus, one gains a clearer understanding of the “new kind of life” available in Christ Jesus. All Christ-followers have been made privy to this new life and given access to a biblical worldview, yet this is a daily process of renewal and continuous transformation towards Christ-likeness. Bible Scholar W.W. Wiersbe notes, “Through Christ, once and for all, we have been given a new position in His new creation, but day by day, we must by faith appropriate what He has given us.”

As one gains a biblically based understanding of their position in Christ and the reality of a daily need towards the transformation of one’s mind (i.e. one’s worldview), it becomes appropriate to address a major characterization of Life 2 – privatization/compartmentalization. This writer believes that the privatization/compartmentalization that characterizes Life 2 is one of the foremost sins that besets this modern era of Christ-followers. While privatization/compartmentalization is not unique to Life 2 (having characterized and been discussed within Life 1), it is not often as easily discerned. Privatization/compartmentalization is in many ways expected within Life 1 in light of sin, which is the other major characterization of that life. Yet, Life 2 suggests one to have become a Christ-follower, thus it is often expected that freedom from sin produces

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freedom from the “patterns of this world.” Again, this is simply not a biblically based supposition.

Not only do the patterns of this world influence that which may be referred to as secular, but the biblically based reality is that those same patterns, if allowed, potentially influence the sacred as well. Life 2 is potentially characterized by sacred purposes, yet the influence of a non-biblical worldview constrains God’s utmost glory in many circumstances. Modernity’s influence continues to be evidenced within Life 2, often undistinguished by its participants. Speaking towards this phenomenon of a Christ-follower who holds a non-biblical worldview, Os Guinness comments, “Today, for some people all of the time and for most people some of the time, secularization ensures that ordinary reality is not just the official reality of the modern world but the only reality.”

Guinness goes on to suggest, “We modern people can be profoundly secular in the midst of explicitly religious activities.” It is then concluded that mere “religious activity” does not equate to a biblical worldview. Nor does the eradication of sin and death in one’s life automatically change one’s perspective. Yet, despite the deviation of Life 1 from its inceptive purpose for God’s utmost glory, and the continued encumbrance of a non-biblical worldview presented in Life 2, there is clearly hope for the Christ-follower of this modern era. Life 3 presents a life unencumbered by sin and death and fully embracing of a biblical worldview that serves to deconstruct the phenomenon of privatization/compartmentalization within the Church, and ultimately the deconstruction of secularism within society.

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209 Ibid., 149.
Os Guinness suggests, “The problem with Western Christians is not that they aren’t where they should be but that they aren’t what they should be where they are.”

It is on this note that one must begin the examination of *Life 3*. Illustration 3.4 represents a life characterized by a biblical worldview. As *Life 1* is characterized by sin and a non-biblical worldview and *Life 2* is characterized by a non-biblical worldview (i.e. privatization/compartmentalization), it again must be initially noted that *Life 3* consists of people, activities and objectives such as jobs, hobbies, sports, family, friends and sex just

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210 Ibid., 157.
as *Life 1* and *Life 2* consisted of people, activities and objectives of the same nature.

While the people, activities and objectives are potentially identical within *Life 1*, *Life 2*, and *Life 3*, there is one defining element that separates *Life 3* from *Life 1* and *Life 2*—a biblical worldview that serves to deconstruct the privatization/compartmentalization of life.

The essence of *Life 3* is freedom to be all that God created one to be, and the capacity to live unto His utmost glory. Commenting on the Christ-follower’s freedom, Bible scholar and theologian J.I. Packer writes, “The New Testament sees salvation in Christ as liberation and the Christian life as one of liberty – Christ has feed us for freedom.”

This notion is supported by such biblical texts as Galatians 5:1, “It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, the, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery,” and, John 8:32 and 36, “Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free…so if the son sets you free, you are free indeed.” *Life 3* acknowledges the biblical truth of Philippians 2:11, “That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father,” and sees all of life as a response to and participation in God’s glory.

Commenting on a life characterized by a biblical worldview that suggests the totality of life as worship, author John Piper writes:

Nothing makes God more supreme and more central in worship than when a people are utterly persuaded that nothing – not money or prestige or leisure or family or job or health or sports or toys or friends – nothing is going to bring satisfaction to their sinful, guilty, aching hearts besides God. This conviction breeds a people who go hard after god on Sunday morning. They are not

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confused about why they are in a worship service. They do not view songs and prayers and sermons as mere traditions or mere duties. They see them as means of getting to God or God getting to them for more of his fullness – no matter how painful that may be for sinners in the short run.212

Similarly, author Harold Best writes, “Our entirety, not just a narrowed spiritual corridor or mere churchgoing and ministry, is swept up in newly complete living. Work becomes worship, just as worship becomes duty and delight.”213 Thus, Life 3 is characterized by a view of God’s creation of all things for His utmost glory214 and the subsequent deconstruction of privatization/compartmentalization.

This biblical worldview that sees the totality of life as worship may seem elementary within the Christian faith, yet the actualization of this belief by Christ-followers of this modern era is constrained and limited at best. Even zealous Christ-followers of the monastic era mistakenly skewed this biblical worldview. Commenting on monasticism’s distortion of a biblical worldview, Guinness notes, “Monasticism began with a reforming mission – it sought to remind an increasingly secularized church that it was still possible to follow the radical way of life required by the gospel but it finished with a relaxing effect – the double standard reserved the radical way for the specialists (the aristocrats of the soul) and let everyone else off the hook.”215 Guinness points out the irony of the “reforming mission” of monasticism in stating, “Monasticism reinforced

214 I Corinthians 10:31 and Colossians 3:17
the secularization it originally set out to resist.” Thus, in the end the monasteries succumbed to the secularization they set out to combat and ultimately promoted “elitism, power, arrogance, and corruption.”

Secularization affected the church during the monastic era just as it continues to affect the Church of this modern era. Just as the clergy of the monastic era suggested a possible “radical way of life,” so the same biblical worldview is available to all Christ-followers within the modern era. While there are many well-intentioned and sincere Christ-followers living *Life 2* in this modern era, Scripture clearly points towards *Life 3* as the biblical way to live and view life. The Christ-follower is mistaken to believe that the “radical way of life,” or a view towards the totality of life as worship is reserved for a select few within the Church. This idea in itself is a belief and product of modern secular thought. John Piper refers to this secular worldview as a promoter of the “professional Christian,” as he adamantly promulgates, “Brothers, We Are Not Professionals.” In this, Piper is arguing against any worldview that creates classification (i.e. compartmentalization) within the Christ-followers call to worship and serve God.

Pastor and author Wayne Cordeiro poignantly comments, “Somewhere along the line we’ve forgotten who God has created us to be. Instead of fulfilling our calling, we hire others to do it for us.” Cordeiro suggests that the church of the modern era has facilitated the creation of generation of “consumer Christians.” Commenting on the

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216 Ibid.

217 Ibid.


219 Wayne Cordeiro *Doing Church As a Team* (Ventura: Regal Books, 2004), 49-50.
consumer Christian phenomenon, Cordeiro notes, “A consumer Christian family can be easily spotted traveling from church to church, shopping for bargains and filling their empty basket of expectations with programs and personalities. After a reasonable amount of searching, they settle on the church that most adequately fits the bill. They then begin to consume and if at any time their rate of consumption is not equal to the churches rate of feeding they pack up and begin the search routine all over again.” Cordeiro’s point rests with the assertion that no Christ-follower has been created to simply consume, thus he concludes, “We are all ministers and we are here first and foremost to give glory to God!”

Life 3 is consumed by a belief that, “We are all ministers and we are here first and foremost to give glory to God!” While each of the three lives presented in this chapter are almost identical within their contents, the pragmatic application of each of these lives is altogether different in light of the worldview each Life maintains.

The Priesthood of all Believers and Professional Soccer

While three distinct and different lives have been presented and discussed throughout this chapter, it must be clearly noted that Professional Soccer Ministries affirms and promotes Life 3. Professional Soccer Ministries exists that those individuals within Life 1 might come to know forgiveness of sin and reconciliation with God. It also exists that those individuals within Life 2 might come to acknowledge the totality of life as worship of God, thus combating the “patterns of this world” and the

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220 Ibid., 50.

221 Ibid.

222 Ibid.
privatization/compartamentalization the world/modernity promotes. Professional Soccer Ministries acknowledges that God is interested in all facets of one’s life. Whereas an individual living Life 2 may see some facets of life as God-things and other facets of life as my-things, Professional Soccer Ministries is built on the foundational principle that all things were created to be God-things (i.e. sacred) and should be used as such.

Professional Soccer Ministries is founded on the biblical notion of the priesthood of all believers. As noted in 1 Peter 2:9-10, “But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.” The 1 Peter 2:9-10 notion of the priesthood of all believers is supportive and connoting of Life 3 and a worldview towards the totality of life as worship for all Christ-followers. Though each man was once bound by sin and only potential of Life 1, Jesus Christ’s aforementioned atoning sacrifice allowed man opportunity to know intimate fellowship with God, and the potential to live as He created him to live. If the double imputation of Jesus Christ’s sacrifice on the Cross is effectual within one’s life, and 1 Peter 2:9-10 is correct, all Christ-followers throughout antiquity and into this modern era are “a royal priesthood;” those created to uniformly and holistically “declare the praises of him” who created each life for that expressed purpose and objective.

In light of the biblical notion of the priesthood of all believers, that that which the “priest” says or does should be holy as the priest is holy. Modernity promoted a belief that there are God-things (i.e. holy or sacred things) and there are man’s things (i.e. secular or carnal), yet it must be noted that all “things” were inceptively created to be
holy (i.e. sacred) thus it is not the created “thing” that is secular but the one utilizing it that transposes its sacred or secular nature upon it. Again, this is not to suggest that all “things” are sacred in their utilization, but that the origin of their nature is furnished by the individual utilizing it. One could utilize the sport of soccer as an example. If created “things” (i.e. soccer) are not inherently sacred or secular, the notion of the priesthood of all believers would suggest that a “priest” (i.e. redeemed Christ-follower) can utilize soccer for sacred/holy purposes just as he/she could utilize soccer for secular/carnal purposes.

Authors Lowrie McCown and Valerie Gin suggest things like sport are “morally and ethically neutral.” They suggest, “The morality of sport is not determined by the objectives of the activity itself, but by the heart of the participants. God gave humans the ability to create sport within His created order. He filled the hearts of players with the desire to play. Yet as a result of sin, sport, like everything else, is now in bondage to decay.” Further, and in light of the aforementioned, it is noted by McCown and Gin that “redeemed people through faith in Jesus have the ability to restore sport as God intended.” They conclude, “Our task as Christian people of sport is to play sport reflecting the image of Christ. That is, if sin has destroyed the good in sport, then perhaps the task of a Christian sportsperson is to reflect the image of Christ in the activity of sport so that sport can be played and enjoyed the way God intended.”

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223 Lowrie McCown and Valerie J. Gin, Focus on Sport in Ministry (Marietta, GA: 360 sports, 2003), 25.
224 Ibid.
225 Ibid.
226 Ibid.
The famous composer and musician Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart understood the notion of the priesthood of all believers. As Mozart lived from 1756-1791, he composed and performed music that was not always embraced by the Church as sacred. Yet, Mozart, a devout Christ-follower with a biblical worldview (Life 3) once commented on his musical genius: “I am a composer and was born to be a Kapellmeister. I neither can nor ought to bury the talent for composition with which God in his goodness has so richly endowed me.”  

In similar fashion, William Tyndale suggested that if one’s desire is to glorify God then the nature of the activity (i.e. playing sport, hanging out with friends or working at a job or preaching God’s Word) “is all one.” Os Guinness writes, “If all that a believer does grows out of faith and is done for the glory of god, then all dualistic distinctions are demolished. There is no higher/lower, sacred/secular, perfect/permitted, contemplative/active or first class/second class…the business person, the teacher, the factory worker, and the television anchor – can do God’s work (or fail to do it) just as much as the minister and the missionary.”  

Thus, just Mozart composed music for God’s glory; the notion of the priesthood of all believers would suggest that soccer can be utilized for His glory as well.

The Reciprocal Deconstruction of Secularism through the Church’s embrace of Professional Soccer Ministries

As Professional Soccer Ministries seeks to utilize professional soccer as a vehicle for Kingdom purposes guided by an understanding that activities of the priest are holy if the priest is holy/sacred in his/her use of that activity, it is noted that the Church’s

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228 Ibid., 34.
embrace of ministry’s of this nature serve a reciprocal purpose. Activities such as soccer have been traditionally linked to that which is secular/carnal. In many situations activities such as music, the arts and corporate pursuits have also been perceived as secular by the Church.\(^{229}\) It is the traditionally perceived secular nature of activities such as soccer that can powerfully serve the Church if embraced as a viable ministry option.

Through the Church’s embrace of activities such as soccer, the Church gains a vehicle into secular society. The magnitude and global implications of soccer have been discussed in chapter two, thus it must now simply be noted that as a result of soccer’s connection to secular society, and the Church’s understanding of a biblical worldview that begins with the remission of sin, secularization is effectively combated through the Church’s use of soccer. Reciprocally, through the Church’s use of an activity traditionally perceived as secular (i.e. soccer) the effects of secularization within the Church are combated and potentially reversed in many situations. Thus, one comes to understand the reciprocal benefits of activities such as soccer being utilized for Kingdom purposes. Not only is the Church provided with a powerful vehicle for the expansion of the Kingdom and ultimate reversal of secularism within society, but the effects of secularism, namely privatization/compartmentalization are countered through the Church’s very embrace of such activities.

**Summary**

Throughout this chapter, this author has attempted to provide the conceptual and theological impetus for Professional Soccer Ministries. Three lives potentially occurring

\(^{229}\) Varying other examples could be made of activities deemed secular by the Church, yet for the purposes of this discourse soccer will be the primary focus of discussion.
within this modern era were presented and discussed. *Life 1* was shown to be characterized by sin and a secularized/non-biblical worldview. *Life 2* was shown to be characterized by a secularized/non-biblical worldview. *Life 3* was shown to be characterized by a biblical worldview that sees the totality of life as worship and for the ultimate glory of God.

The notion of the priesthood of all believers was discussed and its implications towards the use of soccer for sacred/Kingdom purposes determined. Finally, the church’s embrace of ministry’s such as Professional Soccer Ministries was proposed to serve a reciprocal purpose. It was suggested that the church’s embrace of Professional Soccer Ministries would create an avenue for ministry into secular society and reciprocally serve to deconstruct secularism within the church.

The fourth chapter of this project will contain an examination of the objectives of Professional Soccer Ministries. A detailed description and justification for this ministry will be provided. The following question will be answered: How does Professional Soccer Ministries consociate with the church’s response to secularization in the wake of globalization?
CHAPTER FOUR

PROFESSIONAL SOCCER MINISTRIES METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to examine the methodology of Professional Soccer Ministries. While the conceptual and theoretical impetus for Professional Soccer Ministries will be discussed, the pragmatic implementation and outgrowth of the theoretical impetus will be reviewed in chapter five. In addition to discussion of the conceptual and theoretical impetus for Professional Soccer Ministries, this chapter will address the church’s response to secularism in the wake of globalization and evidence Professional Soccer Ministries’ consociation with the church’s suggested response.

The Missional Church Revisited

One potential response of the church to secularism in the wake of globalization may be a paradigm shift in thinking; from minister to missionary. McNeal suggests that while the church has successfully adopted Martin Luther’s Reformation battle cry that emphasized the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers, they have missed the overarching objective behind that Lutheran belief. McNeal comments, “Luther preached that all the people of God are called and gifted for service . . . But this powerful biblical theme has been truncated in its impact, because the church has interpreted it almost solely

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230 Reggie McNeal, The Present Future (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2003). This writer learned of the “minister to missionary” concept as discussed within the third chapter of The Present Future.
for its own use.” In light of this assertion McNeal goes on to suggest, “This myopic vision has resulted in ministry being defined largely in church terms and lay people often being viewed as functionary resources to get church work done.” This is not to suggest a decreased emphasis on the priority of the church within the lives of all believers, or to suggest that the church is not integral within the successful completion of its God ordained role, yet it is to suggest that many well-intentioned churches and church leaders have grown nearsighted and insular in a vision for their members.

As the aforementioned discussion pertaining to the missional church concept suggested (Chapter 2), the church of the 21st century must reinstate a missionary understanding and conviction within each of its members. Church members have not simply been commissioned and empowered as ministers, they are also missionaries within the given contexts and communities in which they exist. The Great Commission instructs all Christ-followers to “go,” and “make disciples of all nations.” Many have taken the Greek verb translated “go” as a command, yet it is actually a present participle that is more accurately translated “going.” Where as the verb “go” might connote a one time event in which one “goes,” the present participle “going” connotes more of a continual process. Commenting on the difference between the verb “go,” and the present participle “going,” W.W. Wiersbe suggests a more accurate translation of Matthew 28:18 might read, “While you are going, make disciples of all the nations.” Further expounding on the translation of “go” within Matthew 28:18 Wiersbe notes, “No matter where we

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231 Ibid., 45.
232 Ibid.
233 Matthew 28:18
are, we should be witnesses for Jesus Christ and seek to win others to Him.” Thus, Wiersbe affirms the Pauline assertion to the church at Corinth, “So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.”

The Missional Church Utilizing the Globalized Game: Soccer

The process of globalization has previously been defined within this paper as, “To make global in scope or application.” Thus, given the aforementioned history and statistics concerning the inception and subsequent proliferation of soccer, the argument may be made for soccer having been a participant in, and an agent of globalization. The acknowledgement of soccer as a participant in, and agent of globalization necessitates the questions: “Can the church utilize the globalization of soccer as a bridge to bring the sacred to the secular, thus combating the widespread ramifications of secularism?” And, if the church does in fact have the authority to utilize soccer towards the deconstruction of secularism within society, “What specific ways can soccer be utilized for this purpose?”

Writing to the church in Rome, Paul states, “How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? And how can the preach unless they are sent?” Within this text the apostle Paul evidences his missionary heart as he calls the church to be a people who seek to communicate Christ

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235 1 Corinthians 10:31


237 Romans 10:14-15a
that unbelievers might “call on the name of the Lord” and be saved. Speaking towards the church’s role in the communication of Christ outside of the confines of the church structure, and quoting George Hunter, professor of church growth and evangelism at Ashbury Theological Seminary, author’s Elmer Towns and Ed Stetzer comment, “Today’s churches are, for the most part, waiting for the barbarians to somehow find us and our institutional setting. Consequently, we are missing out on one of the greatest ‘apostolic adventures’ available to Christians.” In light of this, Towns and Stetzer suggest that the church of this modern era must seek to “live and preach Jesus Christ” in all walks of life, and thus conclude, “We [the church] must go to them [unbelievers] personally with the message of Jesus Christ.”

As the apostle Paul proclaims in Romans 10:14 and 15, “And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? And how can they preach unless they are sent?” It is inferred that church members must be instructed and empowered to preach Jesus Christ, and subsequently commissioned as agents for the glory of God within the world. The church of the 21st century must return to a New Testament model of evangelism as they seek to empower all members as missionaries, and release those members to communicate Christ in all walks of life. Author and pollster George Barna suggests that the American church has been failing in their empowerment of members as missionaries. Barna writes, “The typical churched believer will die without leading a single person to a

\[\text{238} \quad \text{Romans 10:13}\]

\[\text{239} \quad \text{Elmer L. Towns and Ed Stetzer, } \text{Perimeters of Light: Biblical Boundaries for the Emerging Church} \quad \text{(Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2004), 135.}\]

\[\text{240} \quad \text{Ibid.}\]
lifesaving knowledge of and relationship with Jesus Christ.” He goes on to state, “Most churched Christians believe that since they are not gifted in evangelism, such outreach is not a significant responsibility of theirs.” While Barna notes that there is nothing “inherently wrong” with being involved with a local church, he suggests that church membership doesn’t necessarily indicate the successful Christian life, and it will not necessarily combat the process of secularism within society.

If the church of the 21st century is to successfully combat the process of secularism it must proactively seek to find what Towns and Stetzer call “touch points.” Towns and Stetzer write, “Effective evangelism involves finding touch points in people’s lives in order to build relational bridges . . . touch points can take place through any common activity, such a sending a birthday card, performing a random act of kindness, noticing a hobby, or acknowledging a major accomplishment.” Under the aforementioned authority of scripture and God’s commission to all believers to “make disciples,” soccer can be one of the most effective tools for the communication of the gospel within the modern era, and concurrently be utilized to deconstruct secularism. Towns and Stetzer suggest that “building relational bridges” or “touch points” must be a facet and objective of all believers’ daily life. Thus, if the people of the people of this modern era won’t come into the church, the church must go to where the people are through intentional relational bridges such as soccer. As Barna notes, the church of the 21st century must seek to become a people who “do whatever it takes to get closer to God

241 George Barna, Revolution (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 2005), 32.
242 Ibid.
244 Ibid.
and to help others do the same.”245 With that objective in mind, Barna concludes, “We [the church] are not called to go to church; we are called to be the Church.”246

Professional Soccer Ministries Theoretically Defined

In consideration of the church’s commission to “make disciples of all nations,” and the potential touch point, or relational bridge soccer affords the church to engage culture within culture, Professional Soccer Ministries was conceived under the umbrella of Ambassadors in Sport. Ambassadors in Sport are a global soccer ministry that began in 1990 with the intention of communicating the gospel of Jesus Christ through soccer. Ambassadors in Sport desire to partner with the church worldwide in order to facilitate the utilization of soccer as a tool for evangelism in every country and culture. While Ambassadors in Sport largely focuses on ministering at the grass-roots of soccer, Professional Soccer Ministries was created to minister within the professional soccer arena, and through the platform professional soccer creates.

1 Peter 4:10 states, “Each of you should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God’s grace in its various forms.” It is inferred from this passage that everyone has been apportioned varying gifts, and those gifts have been given with the intention that they be utilized to “administer God’s grace in its various forms.” Professional Soccer Ministry is not necessarily a new concept within the world of sports ministry, yet it is the intentional utilization of the “gifts” afforded to professional soccer players for the administering of God’s grace in its various forms in and through the profession of professional soccer. Just as God has given a teacher the talents and abilities

245 George Barna, Revolution (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 2005), 39.
246 Ibid.
to effectively teach for God’s glory, and the doctor the skill and precision to operate for
God’s glory, so Professional Soccer Ministries acknowledges that God has given the
professional soccer player the ability to play his or her sport for God’s glory.

Professional Soccer Ministries has served as a pioneering ministry targeted at the
world of professional soccer/sport. The professional soccer player is potentially
intimately involved in the lives of his or her teammates. In addition, this individual
understands the inner dynamics and culture of the professional sports world, thus the
professional soccer minister has the unique opportunity to speak into the lives of
professional athletes in a way afforded to few others. Professional Soccer Ministries is
modeled after the incarnational ministry of Jesus Christ (e.g. though fully God, Jesus
Christ came to earth and became fully man in an effort to bring reconciliation to
reprobate and fallen humanity).

As it is the vision of Professional Soccer Ministries to saturate the world of
professional soccer with the gospel of Jesus Christ and see all people participating in and
influenced by professional soccer become fully devoted followers of Christ, the
objectives of Professional Soccer Ministry are six-fold. Profession Soccer Ministries
intention to:

1. **Identify** current or potential professional soccer players with a
   passion for God and the desire to serve and honor Him with their
   life.

2. **Envision** those who have been identified with the potential ministry
   they can have through the platform of professional soccer.

3. **Train** those who have been envisioned in the specific methods and
   strategies of ministering through the platform of professional soccer.
4. *Resource* those who have been trained with the confidence and ability to minister through the platform of professional soccer within its various potential capacities.

5. *Deploy* equipped ministers of the gospel of Jesus Christ into their specific “mission fields” around the world.

6. *Maintain/Minister* to those who have been sent out to do the work of evangelism and discipleship through professional soccer.

**Identify**

As ministry is largely conducted by and comprised of people, Professional Soccer Ministries relies heavily on the identification process. This process may be the crucial facet of the overall six-fold objectives of Professional Soccer Ministries. Just as the local church or varying other para-church organizations are in search of people God has uniquely gifted and called to serve with their organization, so has Professional Soccer Ministries intentioned to seek out those uniquely positioned for its ministry.

Some have suggested the identification process of those who have been uniquely gifted with the ability to play professional soccer, and even more, a heart to serve God through those abilities, to be like finding a needle in a hay stack. Though the situation is not nearly so drastic, it is no small task to identify individuals God might desire to utilize within a ministry of that nature.

Professional Soccer Ministries relies heavily on the global network of relationships Ambassadors in Sport has created over the past 20 years. Many players are now being identified through this network as the understanding of Professional Soccer Ministries grows and is communicated to the Ambassadors in Sport staff globally.

Within the United States intentional efforts to befriend coaches at all collegiate levels are made. A letter and brochure describing the work of Ambassadors in Sport and
Professional Soccer Ministries is annually sent to every college soccer coach in the nation, and a representative of Professional Soccer Ministries now presents the ministry to 40-60 college soccer teams each year.

Finally, the internet serves an invaluable tool within the identification process. Plans for a bi-monthly Professional Soccer Ministries e-newsletter and other internet driven strategies are currently in progress.

Envision

Following the identification process Professional Soccer Ministries intentions to envision all potential candidates with the possibility of serving as a missionary through their current or potential profession. The envisioning process occurs in a variety of ways yet it is noted that this process is facilitated in stages. Initially, the potential Professional Soccer Ministries candidate is contacted through phone or email. After assessing the interest of each candidate the initial contact is followed by a personal visit. While envisioning through discussion has proven beneficial, this process is most effective within an experientially based training program called the Professional Soccer Ministries Academy.

Train

Refer to the Professional Soccer Ministries Academy below.

Resource

Refer to the Professional Soccer Ministries Academy below.
Deploy

Following the Professional Soccer Ministries Academy it is intentioned that envisioned; equipped; and resourced professional soccer ministers will be placed by two’s on various professional soccer teams around the world. It is the intention of Professional Soccer Ministries to help facilitate this process through the utilization of Christian soccer agents and the negotiation of professional contracts for those individuals called to serve with Professional Soccer Ministries beyond the training academy.

Maintain/Minister

Ambassadors in Sport are a missionary sending agency and as such Professional Soccer Ministries intentions to actively support its missionaries once they are deployed to their specific field of service (i.e., country they will serve in and team they will play on). Professional sport is a difficult vocation and the use of this profession for Kingdom purposes can be taxing. As a result, those deployed by Professional Soccer Ministries are held to a rigid accountability program and progress is monitored weekly. All playing opportunities are discussed and assessed by the Professional Soccer Ministries staff and subsequent guidance is provided for all professional soccer missionaries.

Professional Soccer Ministries Academy

The Professional Soccer Ministries Academy is the most comprehensive and effective model of professional soccer ministry preparation currently available. The three-month Professional Soccer Ministries internship was formerly a partnership between the Ambassadors in Sport and Vanguard Ministries/Cascade Surge Minor League Soccer Team. Potential Professional Soccer Ministries participants were based in
Salem, Oregon to participate in the three-month training program. As a major facet of the program, Professional Soccer Ministries participants formerly played for the Cascade Surge in the Premier Development League. The Premier Development League is comprised of approximately fifty-five teams throughout the United States and Canada, and is specifically designed for the premier talent of the US collegiate soccer system, and other current and potential professional soccer players. While Professional Soccer Ministries formerly conducted its academy in partnership with Vanguard Ministries/Cascade Surge, at the time of this paper’s writing the academy is in transition to Cleveland, Ohio and will be owned and operated by Ambassadors in Sport beginning May 2007.

Professional Soccer Ministries Academy Methods

Academy participants are instructed in the following areas, and additional opportunity for experiential learning is provided:

A. Leadership Development – utilization of the books *Visioneering* and the *Next Generation Leader* by Andy Stanley.

B. Servanthood – This concept is discussed as a major theme throughout the Academy as it stands in such stark contrast to the world’s view of professional athletes. The book *The Practice of the Presence of God* by Brother Lawrence is discussed.

C. Biblical Basis for Sports Ministry – Twelve biblical principals that specifically address a treatise for the use of sport for Kingdom purposes.

D. Topical Discussions – Issues concerning Chaplaincy, Ethics within competitive sport and Incarnational ministry are discussed.

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247 The Premier Development League (PDL) is a facet of the United Soccer League (USL). To learn more about the USL search [www.uslsoccer.com](http://www.uslsoccer.com)

248 See Appendix A.
E. *Cross Cultural Ministry* – An overview of the dynamics of cross-cultural ministry is examined.

F. *PSM Pragmatics* – Discussion focused on preparation for the pragmatic elements of professional soccer ministry (i.e., How to lead a team bible study, how to speak to and through the media, how to effectively communicate a Christian testimony, etc.).

G. *God’s Economy* – Discussion/study on the economy of God vs. the economy of this world. How do we practically live daily within God’s economy as a pro soccer player?

H. *Spiritual Gifts Assessment* – The DISC Assessment test is utilized to help participants understand their unique spiritual gifting and potential ministry strengths.

**Experiential Learning**

Various experiential learning opportunities are made available throughout the Academy. It is intentioned that through these opportunities academy participants will gain a greater understanding of the conceptual information discussed and the skills necessary to effectively utilize the platform of professional soccer. The key components are as follows:

A. *Evangelistic Camps/Clincis* – Participants are instructed in the dynamics of facilitating an evangelistic soccer camp or clinic. Two camps are conducted in partnership with local churches, in addition to conducting approximately 10-15 evangelistic clinics.

B. *Prison Ministry* – Participants minister through soccer in a local prison and spend time in an area correctional facility two afternoons each week.

C. *Team Tour* – The team tour provides the Academy participant with a two week cross-cultural playing/ministry experience. The team tour is intentioned to contextualize many of the concepts discussed throughout the Academy as it is hoped that the tour would help each participant gain a greater vision for how God might use them through professional soccer internationally.
D. *SMTC* – The Ambassadors in Sport International *Sports Ministry Training Course* is attended. This serves as a time of fellowship with other sports ministry leaders from around the world, and it adds to the participant’s general knowledge and understanding of the global sports ministry scene.

E. *Local Outreach* – The team makes daily “appearances” in and around the community. The team also participates in after school programs for at-risk youth, and conducts school assemblies.

**Church Partnering Strategy**

As current and potential professional soccer players are identified, envisioned, trained, resourced, and deployed to do the work of evangelism and discipleship in and through the platform of professional soccer, it is intentioned that these individuals will assist the ministry of the local church and the efforts of various Para-church entities. The platform potential to the professional soccer player can provide the unique opportunity for the professional soccer minister to serve as a catalyst for the aforementioned ministries, thus each professional soccer minister is connected to, and serves within a specified church throughout each field assignment.

**Strategies for Ministry through Professional Soccer**

Professional Soccer Ministries intention to continually develop new strategy in response to varying field opportunities and the gift mix of those individuals carrying out the ministry. At its best, strategy is based upon theory. While much of the strategy listed below has proven effective for ministry in and through professional soccer, all strategy does not work in all situations. The itemized list below serves as a review of all current Professional Soccer Ministries strategy being utilized globally.
Ministry to the Professional Team

The professional soccer minister has the unique opportunity to befriend and minister to teammates, coaches and those individuals directly associated with their professional team. While these unbelieving individuals inevitably associate with people outside of the team, much of their daily time is spent with the team and pride often keeps them from intimate relationships outside of the team. In light of this, Professional Soccer Ministries intention to minister to those individuals connected to the team in the following ways:

A. *Team Bible Study:* There are two main strategies for a team Bible study.  
   1. Believers discipleship Bible study  
   2. Seekers evangelistic Bible study

B. *Player Relational Evangelism:* Intentional development of relationships with key players on the team. Intentionally looking for opportunities to engage players one might not normally engage, and seeking opportunity to spend time together outside of team events.

C. *Player Discipleship:* Identifying players who are already Christian and seeking to enter into a one-on-one, intentional, discipleship/mentorship relationship. Player seeks to develop other players for the work of Professional Soccer Ministries.

D. *Life Skills:* This is an area that is often overlooked within professional soccer. Many professional soccer players grow up playing for a club that requires them to live away from their family. As a result, many current professional soccer players lack basic life-skills most people take for granted (i.e., sex education, manners, interpersonal communication/relationships, etc.)

E. *Leadership Training:* The development of potential leaders on one’s team. This is a process of identifying and training those individuals that may take over the ministry once the professional soccer minister has departed. These individuals may be players or staff within the team.

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*249 Four examples of the Professional Soccer Ministries Bible study curriculum can be viewed in Appendix B.*
F. *Chaplaincy*: Service as a chaplain to one’s own team or teams within one’s league.

G. *National Team Chaplaincy*: Service as a chaplain to the national soccer team of the country one is playing in.

Ministry through the Platform of Professional Soccer

In addition to the professional soccer minister’s opportunity to befriend and minister to those individuals directly connected to their team, they have opportunity to utilize the platform their personal association with the team affords them to minister to individuals outside of the team. In light of this Professional Soccer Ministries’ intention to minister to those individuals not connected to the team in the following ways:

A. *Testimony*: The testimony is one of the most powerful tools within the ministry of professional soccer. Potential opportunities may include:
   1. Youth Groups
   2. Banquets
   3. Outreach events sponsored by local churches
   4. Schools (both public and private)
   5. Universities

B. *Churches*: Share in the local church. Opportunity to encourage the local body of Christ with the knowledge that there is a public figure in their town that loves the Lord and has come to their city to serve.

C. *Festivals or Special events*: Non-Christian operated events offer opportunity for the professional soccer minister to serve the community and bring a Christian message to an otherwise secular event.

Camps, Clinics and Additional Opportunities

A. *Church-sponsored Camp*: Opportunity for the professional soccer minister to partner with local church’s to attract non-churched youth from surrounding communities. The church facilitates promotion and administration of the 2-5 day camp, and the professional soccer minister conducts the coaching and contextualized biblical teaching.

B. *Church-sponsored Soccer School*: The mobilization of lay people for the operation of a weekly soccer school held at or near the church site.
C. Soccer Academy: The professional soccer minister operates a free clinic on a regular basis at a specified site for a specified duration of time. Time and location are subject to change following the completion of each specified session.

D. Random Clinics: The conduction of a clinic in a random area, field or village. The professional soccer minister has the ability to attract attention through their platform on the professional team. This affords opportunity to communicate Christ in a non-threatening way through random scenarios such as a spontaneous clinic or public appearance.

E. Sports Ministry Seminar: The envisioning of the local church with the potential of sports ministry through the church. The instruction of lay individuals in the biblical basis for sports ministry and various pragmatics of the ministry.

F. Orphanage Visitation

G. Prison Visitation: The conduction of a clinic or appearance in a local prison or correctional facility. Opportunity to take non-Christian teammates, and lay church members. Potential to utilize one’s platform to serve as a catalyst for the development of a potential ministry platform for someone else.

H. Group Home Visitation

I. Player Testimony Card: Proclamation of the gospel through testimony on the back of a player card (similar to a baseball card).

J. Host Team Meals: The utilization of food to draw teammates into fellowship and conversation outside of team events.

K. Utilization of the Media: Proclamation of the gospel through the newspaper, television, radio, or internet.

L. Service Projects: Opportunity for the professional soccer minister to serve the community in a tangible way (i.e., digging a well, building a house, serving food, etc).
Ministry of Prayer

While the opportunity for the professional soccer minister may be vast in terms of community involvement and public proclamation of the gospel, the ministry of prayer is most valued within Professional Soccer Ministries. All professional soccer ministers are instructed to participate in the following ministries of prayer:

a. *Team roster prayer:* Daily prayer through the roster of one’s team. Prayer for the coach, managers, team officials and owners.

b. *Prayer-walk the field:* Daily arrival at team training 30-minutes prior to all other players. Prayer for attitude, teammates and opportunity to make Christ known through one’s actions and words.

c. *Prayer-walk the city:* One day per week the professional soccer minister walks to key sites within their city and prays for the unsaved of the city and opportunity to make Christ known through their life and ministry in that city.

d. *Prayer with people:* People can be radically influenced by a professional sports figure willing to spend time praying with people as need and opportunity arise.

Professional Soccer Ministries Consociation with the Church

It has been stated that the 21st century church must shift from “minister to missionary,” as it seeks to promote the concept of the priesthood of all believers. In light of the globalization of soccer, its worldwide popularity, and the platform professional soccer creates for its participants, the church should intentionally seek to envision and empower its professional soccer members as missionaries in and through that profession. Professional Soccer Ministries directly consociates with the church’s

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250 1 Peter 2:9-10

251 It is again noted that FIFA, the governing body of soccer currently has more participating nations (207) than the United Nations (191).
response to secularism in the wake of globalization as the objective of each entity’s 
response is identical—the deconstruction of secularism in all things.

As the church of the 21st century seeks to consociate with entities such as 
Professional Soccer Ministries the potential to deconstruct secularism in this modern era 
greatly increases. The utilization of professional soccer towards the deconstruction of 
secularism is not the only tool available to the 21st century church, nor is it necessarily 
the best tool available in this modern era, yet it does afford the church an additional valid 
touch point with non-believers and a powerful vehicle by which the church can engage 
culture in a relevant and effective way.

Summary

This chapter has described and examined the methodology of Professional Soccer 
Ministries. The missional church concept was revisited and the missional church 
utilizing soccer discussed. The presentation of Professional Soccer Ministries 
methodology in conjunction with subsequent explanation served to answer the question 
of the church’s ability to consociate with Professional Soccer Ministries in response to 
secularism in the wake of globalization. Professional Soccer Ministries consociates with 
the church in light of the 1 Peter 2:9-10 notion of the priesthood of all believers and the 
church’s commission to make disciples of all nations, which would encompass soccer 
players and the nations they inhabit. It was also pointed out that Professional Soccer 
Ministries consociates with the church towards the deconstruction of secularism in light 
of the global popularity of soccer and the relational bridge it offers the church for the 
engagement of culture outside of the church.
Chapter five of this study will examine the pragmatic application of Professional Soccer Ministries. All facets of the ministry will be reviewed and a subsequent analysis provided. The following question will be answered: In this current era is Professional Soccer Ministries an effective tool of the church for the deconstruction of secularism?
CHAPTER FIVE

PROFESSIONAL SOCCER MINISTRIES
PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION AND ANALYSIS

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to examine the pragmatic implementation of Professional Soccer Ministries. Components of the methodology discussed in chapter four will be revisited as the implementation of the methodology will be reviewed. In addition to discussion of the pragmatic implementation of Professional Soccer Ministries, this chapter will analyze and discuss two years of field data produced by Professional Soccer Ministries. Finally, this chapter will utilize the assessment of the field data to address Professional Soccer Ministries' effectiveness as a tool for the deconstruction of secularism.

Professional Soccer Ministries Six-Fold Objectives Applied

As noted in chapter four, it is the vision of Professional Soccer Ministries to saturate the world of professional soccer with the gospel of Jesus Christ and see all people participating in and influenced by professional soccer become fully devoted followers of Christ, thus the objectives of Professional Soccer Ministry are six-fold. Professional Soccer Ministries intention to:

1. Identify current or potential professional soccer players with a passion for God and the desire to serve and honor Him with their life.
2. *Envision* those who have been identified with the potential ministry they can have through the platform of professional soccer.

3. *Train* those who have been envisioned in the specific methods and strategies of ministering through the platform of professional soccer.

4. *Resource* those who have been trained with the confidence and ability to minister through the platform of professional soccer within its various potential capacities.

5. *Deploy* equipped ministers of the gospel of Jesus Christ into their specific “mission fields” around the world.

6. *Maintain/minister* to those who have been sent out to do the work of evangelism and discipleship through professional soccer.

As a theoretical discussion of the six-fold objectives of Professional Soccer Ministry was provided in chapter four, the varying means by which those objectives are fulfilled shall now be reviewed.

**Envisioning Current and Potential Professional Soccer Ministers**

As noted in chapter four, identifying current and potential professional soccer ministers is of quintessential importance to the success of Professional Soccer Ministries. As the identification process has been suggested to be one that relies heavily on the global network of Ambassadors in Sport and varying speaking events yielding personal contact with current and potential professional soccer players, the envisioning process is also paramount in the success of Professional Soccer Ministries. Professional Soccer Ministries believes that experiential learning is second-to-none in its effectiveness towards the envisioning of potential professional soccer ministers. In light of this belief, Professional Soccer Ministries seeks to envision potential professional soccer ministers through short-term mission trips.
Between October 2003 and December 2005 Professional Soccer Ministries conducted four short-term mission trips involving eight countries and fifty-two different current or potential professional soccer players. Each of the four short-term mission trips were classified as “tours” and titled as such: Sudan Tour, Thailand Tour, Indonesia Tour and Tajikistan Tour.

Sudan Tour

The Sudan Tour was conducted during October 2003 and visited Mozambique, South Africa and Sudan. This tour was targeted at the envisioning of current professional soccer players, thus every player excluding one was contracted as a professional player as they participated on Sudan Tour. Table 5.1 identifies the 15 participating players, age, professional team and those players that entered some form of vocational ministry following the Sudan Tour:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Player</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Professional Team</th>
<th>Ministry</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Carlos Calderson</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>Charlotte Eagles</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brian Chudd</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>Northwest College</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shane Dasher</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>Cascade Surge</td>
<td>Entered</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marc dos Santos</td>
<td>26</td>
<td></td>
<td>Entered</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Andy Gustafarro</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>Charlotte Eagles</td>
<td>Entered</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jonah Long</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>Charlotte Eagles</td>
<td>Entered</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Treswell Overmeyer</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>Jomo Cosmos (S.A.)</td>
<td>Entered</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sam Pam</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>Orlando Pirates (S.A.)</td>
<td>Current</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Martin Rennie</td>
<td>28</td>
<td></td>
<td>Entered</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mark Shulte</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>Minnesota Thunder</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steve Shak</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>Minnesota Thunder</td>
<td>Entered</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aaron Tredway</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>Zanaco F.C. (Zambia)</td>
<td>Current</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jeremy Weingradt</td>
<td>36</td>
<td></td>
<td>Current</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greg Wheaton</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>Minnesota Thunder</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Thailand Tour

The Thailand Tour was conducted during June 2004 and visited Thailand and Myanmar. This tour was targeted at the envisioning of potential professional soccer players, thus every player excluding two were classified as amateur players as the participated on the Thailand Tour. Table 5.2 identifies the 17 participating players, age, college attended, and those players that entered some form of vocational ministry following the Thailand Tour:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Player's Name</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>College</th>
<th>AIS Staff</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adrian Balc</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Cleveland State University</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jason Blair</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Cedarville College</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elliot Fauske</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>Seattle University</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carlos Calderson</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>Christian Heritage College</td>
<td>Entered</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nick Donaldson</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>Oregon State University</td>
<td>Entered</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caleb Eernisee</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>Taylor University</td>
<td>Entered</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pedro Figuredo</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>Judson College</td>
<td>Entered</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Timothy Landry</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>Roberts Wesleyan College</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glen Duerr</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>Western Ontario Univ.</td>
<td>Entered</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kent Manson</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Mount Olive College</td>
<td>Entered</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dana McGregor</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>Fresno State University</td>
<td>Entered</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Josh Miller</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>Oklahoma Christian</td>
<td>Entered</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brett Norton</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>Houghton College</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tony Rotunno</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>Azusa Pacific University</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jeremy Tolleson</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>Wheaton College</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aaron Tredway</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>CSU - Stanislaus</td>
<td>Current</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Indonesia Tour

The Indonesia Tour was conducted during June 2005 and visited Medan, Indonesia and surrounding areas within 300-kilometers of Medan. This tour was targeted at the envisioning of potential professional soccer players, thus every player excluding one were classified as amateur players as the participated on the Indonesia Tour. Table
5.3 identifies the 22 participating players, age, college attended, and those players that entered some form of vocational ministry following the Indonesia Tour:

Table 5.3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Player's Name</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>College</th>
<th>AIS Staff</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Andriy Buddny</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>Azusa Pacific University</td>
<td>Entered</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seth Burke</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>Western Baptist College</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morgan Cathey</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>Azusa Pacific University</td>
<td>Entered</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matt Clark</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>Oklahoma Christian</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Billy Crompton</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>Messiah College</td>
<td>Entered</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kent Manson</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>Mount Olive</td>
<td>Current</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dana McGregor</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>Fresno State University</td>
<td>Current</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elijah Mwasanga</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>Oklahoma Baptist</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Troy Ready</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>University of Washington</td>
<td>Entered</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steven Rigby</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>Wheaton College</td>
<td>Entered</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tony Rotunno</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>Azusa Pacific University</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Andrew Schmitt</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>Baptist Bible College</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nick Sedor</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>Western Baptist College</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caleb Eernisse</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>Taylor University</td>
<td>Current</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aaron Tredway</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>CSU - Stanislaus</td>
<td>Current</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Josh Westerman</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>Gonzaga University</td>
<td>Entered</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luke Williams</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>Westmont College</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Tajikistan Tour

The Tajikistan Tour was conducted during October 2005 and visited Tajikistan and Germany. This tour was targeted at the envisioning of current professional soccer players, thus every player excluding one was contracted as a professional player as they participated on Tajikistan Tour. Table 5.4 identifies the 15 participating players, age, professional team and those players that entered some form of vocational ministry following the Tajikistan Tour:
Table 5.4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Player's Name</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Team</th>
<th>Ministry</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Martin Bateman</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>Cascade Surge (USA)</td>
<td>Current</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carlos Calderson</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>Cascade Surge (USA)</td>
<td>Current</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Silvio Cesar Ferreira Costa</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>Fluminense (Brazil)</td>
<td>Current</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nick Donaldson</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>Leigh RMI (England)</td>
<td>Current</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Angel Ledesma</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>Minnesota (USA)</td>
<td>Current</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jonah Long</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>Columbus Crew (USA)</td>
<td>Current</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dana McGregor</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>Cascade Surge (USA)</td>
<td>Current</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Josh Miller</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>Cascade Surge (USA)</td>
<td>Current</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caleb Norkus</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>Puerto Rico Islanders (USA)</td>
<td>Entered</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Derek Potteiger</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>Harrisburg Islanders (USA)</td>
<td>Current</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Troy Ready</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>IK Start (Norway)</td>
<td>Current</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luciano Dias Santos</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>Sao Paulo (Brazil)</td>
<td>Entered</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marcel Stoob</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>Swiss</td>
<td>Current</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aaron Tredway</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>Cascade Surge (USA)</td>
<td>Current</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greg Wheaton</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>Minnesota Thunder (USA)</td>
<td>Current</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stef VanMeerveld</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>Bennekon (Holland)</td>
<td>Current</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Training and Resourcing Current and Potential Professional Soccer Ministers

The world of sports ministry is in a relative state of infancy, thus there is limited published material pertaining to the training and resourcing of athletes for ministry. This is not to suggest that there is no published material, but the material that has been published is extremely limited. In light of this, the published material for the training and resourcing of professional athletes for ministry in and through professional sport is even more limited. In response to the limited training opportunity for professional athletes desirous of utilizing professional sport for ministry purposes this author wrote the unpublished professional sports ministry guide entitled *Competing for Glory: Revolutionizing Athletic Success*, and created the Professional Soccer Ministries Academy in 2004.
As noted in chapter four, the Professional Soccer Ministries Academy is currently the most comprehensive training opportunity available to current or potential professional soccer players interested in becoming professional soccer ministers. In April 2004 Ambassadors in Sport and Professional Soccer Ministries entered into a partnership with Vanguard Ministries/Cascade Surge soccer team. Subsequently, the Professional Soccer Ministries Academy was facilitated in Salem, Oregon from April 2004 through August 2005. Within the period of time spanning from April 2004 though August 2005 the Professional Soccer Ministries Academy conducted two 3-month training programs, both occurring from May 1 through August 15 within consecutive years.

Professional Soccer Ministries Academy: 2004

The methodology of the Professional Soccer Ministry Academy was reviewed within chapter four, thus Table 5.5 addresses the 2004 Academy participants, age, college attended, and those participants that joined or have committed to join Ambassadors in Sport/Professional Soccer Ministries following the completion of the Academy:
Table 5.5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Player's Name</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>College</th>
<th>Received Christ during season</th>
<th>Join AIS Staff</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>John Ames</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>Houghton College</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adrian Balc</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>Cleveland State</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jason Blair</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>Cedarville College</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Andriy Buddny</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>Azusa Pacific</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carlos Calderson</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>Christian Heritage</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tony Chavez</td>
<td>29</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nick Donaldson</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>Oregon State</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caleb Eernisee</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>Taylor University</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elliot Fauske</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>Seattle University</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pedro Figueredo</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>Judson College</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Timothy Landry</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>Roberts Wesleyan</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ian Liebrandt</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>Azusa Pacific</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kent Manson</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>Mount Olive</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graeme Mathie</td>
<td>22</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dana McGregor</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>Fresno State Univ.</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Josh Miller</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>Oklahoma Christian</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brett Norton</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>Houghton College</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bradly O'Leary</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>Humboldt State</td>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tony Rotunno</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>Azusa Pacific</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jeremy Tolleseon</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>Wheaton College</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aaron Tredway</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>CSU - Stanislaus</td>
<td></td>
<td>Current</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michael Wheelhouse</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>Houghton College</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is additionally noted that four individuals (Adrian Balc, Andriy Buddny, Tony Chavez and Bradly O’Leary) participated on the Cascade Surge soccer team throughout the 2004 season. While these four players were not participants in the Professional Soccer Ministries Academy, they all participated in a weekly team bible study and all four players made professions of faith following the 2004 season. It is for that reason that these four players are included in table 5.5.
Table 5.6 addresses the 2005 Academy participants, age, college attended, and those participants that joined or have committed to join Ambassadors in Sport/Professional Soccer Ministries following the completion of the Academy:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Player's Name</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>College</th>
<th>Joined AIS Staff</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Andriy Buddny</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>Azusa Pacific University</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seth Burke</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>Western Baptist</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carlos Calderson</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>Christian Heritage</td>
<td>Current</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morgan Cathey</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>Azusa Pacific University</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tony Chavez</td>
<td>30</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matt Clark</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>Oklahoma Christian</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Billy Crompton</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>Messiah College</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nick Donaldson</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>Oregon State University</td>
<td>Current</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ian Liebrandt</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>Azusa Pacific University</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kent Manson</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>Mount Olive College</td>
<td>Current</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dana McGregor</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>Fresno State University</td>
<td>Current</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elijah Mwasanga</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>Oklahoma Baptist Univ.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Troy Ready</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>University of Washington</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steven Rigby</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>Wheaton College</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tony Rotunno</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>Azusa Pacific University</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Andrew Schmitt</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>Baptist Bible College</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nick Sedor</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>Western Baptist</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jeremy Tolleman</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>Wheaton College</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aaron Tredway</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>CSU – Stanislaus</td>
<td>Current</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Josh Westerman</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>Gonzaga University</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luke Williams</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>Westmont College</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Deployment of Professional Soccer Missionaries**

While the identification, envisioning, training and resourcing of current and potential professional soccer ministers holds extreme value within the overall objectives of Professional Soccer Ministries, the deployment of envisioned, trained and resourced
professional soccer missionaries is at the heart of the vision. The aforementioned aspects of envisioning, training and resourcing are beneficial in and of themselves, yet Professional Soccer Ministries culminates in the successful deployment and implementation of the ministry each professional soccer missionary was envisioned, trained and resourced to accomplish. While each individual’s professional soccer ministry inevitably looks different from each other, the vision of Professional Soccer Ministries to saturate the world of professional soccer with the gospel of Jesus Christ, and intentionally utilize the sport and profession of professional soccer for God’s ultimate glory binds its participants together.

Three deployment options currently exist within Professional Soccer Ministries. A Professional Soccer Ministries missionary can be deployed to assist the work of a current Ambassador in Sport office, pioneer or prepare a country for a potential future Ambassadors in Sport office or assist the work of a partnering mission organization through a loan agreement between Ambassadors in Sport and the partnering organization. Between August 2004 and December 2005 Professional Soccer Ministries deployed two professional soccer missionaries to assist the work of a current Ambassadors in Sport office, four professional soccer missionaries to pioneer or prepare a country for a potential future Ambassadors in Sport office and two professional soccer missionaries were loaned to a partnering organization. Regardless of the deployment strategy each professional soccer missionary was deployed under, all professional soccer missionaries were uniformly deployed to partner with and assist the work of the church in the country they were deployed to.
Manchester, England: Nick Donaldson

Nick Donaldson participated in the 2004 Professional Soccer Ministries Academy after graduating from Oregon State University in December 2003. Nick was deployed to Manchester, England to assist the work of the original Ambassadors in Sport office that was established in 1990. Nick earned a contract with Leigh RMI in the English Forth Division, and helped the office further establish its local ministry from August 2004 through May 2005. Nick returned to the Professional Soccer Ministries Academy as a mentor-player from May 2005 through August 2005, and he participated in the Tajikistan Tour in October 2005. Nick entered the corporate world in January 2006 terminating his active status with Professional Soccer Ministries.

Goiania, Brazil: Pedro Figuredo and Elliot Fauske

Pedro Figuredo participated in the 2004 Professional Soccer Ministries Academy after graduating from Judson College in May 2002. Elliot Fauske also participated in the 2004 Professional Soccer Ministries Academy after graduating from Seattle University in May 2004. Both Pedro and Elliot were deployed to Goiania, Brazil to pioneer and serve as a potential forerunner for a long-term Ambassador in Sport national office. As Ambassadors in Sport had no previous long-term ministry presence in Brazil, Pedro and Elliot sought to establish contacts with various churches in and around Goiania, and partnership opportunities with organizations such as Athletas De Cristo and Project Grow. Pedro (a Brazilian National) earned a contract with Aparecidense in the

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Athletas De Cristo is a non-denominational sports ministry founded in Brazil. To learn more about Athletas De Cristo see [http://www.atletasdecristo.org](http://www.atletasdecristo.org)

\[253\]

Project Grow was founded by Pastor Marlon Britto and is a social project that utilizes soccer to minister to over 800 children weekly.
Brazilian State League in January 2005, and played for e Imperatriz do Maranhao in the Brazilian State League throughout the 2006 season. Elliot trained with Aparecidense in the Brazilian State League from October 2004 through March 2005 and returned to the United States to pursue further education, thus terminating active status with Professional Soccer Ministries in April 2005.

In August 2005 Ambassadors in Sport established a Brazilian national office located in Sao Paulo, Brazil. At present, Pedro continues to play professional soccer in Brazil and serves as a satellite-worker for the Ambassadors in Sport national office.

Sydney, Australia: Joshon Miller and Jonah Long

Joshon Miller participated in the 2004 Professional Soccer Ministries Academy after attending Oklahoma Christian College. Jonah Long participated in the 2003 Sudan Tour and the 2005 Tajikistan Tour after graduating from Western Illinois University in May 2001. Both Josh and Jonah were deployed to Sydney, Australia to pioneer and serve as a potential forerunner for a long-term Ambassador in Sport national office. Josh earned a contract with the Canterbury Berries in the Australian Second Division and Jonah earned a contract with the Sutherland Sharks in the Australian First Division. Josh played for Canterbury and participated as a teacher of Religious Education in the Sydney Public Schools system from November 2005 through May 2006. Josh returned to the United States in May 2006 and currently awaits re-assignment within Professional Soccer Ministries/Ambassadors in Sport. Jonah played for Sutherland and participated as a teacher of religious education in the Sydney Public Schools system from November 2005 through March 2006. Jonah was reassigned to Reykjavik, Iceland in March 2006 and he earned a contract with IBV Vestmannarýjar in the Icelandic Premier League. Jonah will
pioneer and serve as a potential forerunner for a long-term Ambassador in Sport national office and continue to play in Iceland through September 2006, at which time his assignment within Professional Soccer Ministries will be reassessed.

Beirut, Lebanon: Carlos Calderson and Dana McGregor

Carlos Calderson participated in the 2004 Professional Soccer Ministries Academy after graduating from Christian Heritage College in 1998. Carlos also played four seasons professionally with the San Diego Flash of the USL First Division and two seasons with the Charlotte Eagles of the USL First Division before attending the Professional Soccer Ministries Academy. Dana McGregor participated in the 2004 Professional Soccer Ministries Academy after graduating from Fresno State University in May 2001. Both Carlos and Dana were deployed to Beirut, Lebanon to partner with Operation Mobilization and potentially serve as a potential forerunner for a long-term Ambassador in Sport national office.

Carlos and Dana did not obtain professional playing contracts while in Beirut, but played with an amateur team from October 2004 through April 2005. Both Carlos and Dana returned to the United States in May 2005 and participated in the Professional Soccer Ministries Academy as a mentor-player from May 2005 through August 2005. Carlos participated in the Tajikistan Tour and remains with Professional Soccer Ministries on in-active status as he assumed the head soccer coaching position at San Diego Christian College in September 2005. Dana was reassigned to Cape Town, South Africa in October 2005 to assist the work of the Ambassadors in Sport national office. Dana obtained a contract with Clyde Pinelands in the South African Second Division, and is currently developing a strategy for Professional Soccer Ministries in South Africa.
Montevideo, Uruguay: Mark Schulte

Mark Schulte participated in the 2003 Sudan Tour after graduating from University of Dayton in May 1999. Mark is not a Professional Soccer Ministries missionary, but is classified as an “associate” of the ministry. Mark was not deployed by Professional Soccer Ministries/Ambassadors in Sport, yet is supported by and represents the ministry in Uruguay. Mark played for the Minnesota Thunder from 2000 through 2003. In March 2004 Mark joined IBV Vestmannaeyjar in the Icelandic Premier League. Following the 2004 season, Mark earned a contract with the Columbus Crew in the United States Major League Soccer. Mark played for the Crew from January 2005 through December 2005 and then earned a contract with the Montevideo Wonderers in the Uruguayan Premier League in February 2006. Mark currently serves as a potential forerunner for a long-term Ambassador in Sport national office and continues to play in Uruguay.

**Professional Soccer Ministries Analysis**

Given the six questions this paper seeks to answer it is of extreme value to analyze the effectiveness of Professional Soccer Ministries. While there is no standardized quantitative tool for the analysis of a ministry of this nature, the data gathered and previously presented will be reviewed and conclusions drawn. The data is taken from Professional Soccer Ministries activity spanning October 2003 through May 2006, and will address three aspects of the ministry previously reported: Envisioning current and potential professional soccer ministers, training and resourcing current and

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254 See the Statement of the Problem (Chapter One).
potential professional soccer ministers and deployment of professional soccer missionaries.

Analysis of the Effectiveness of Professional Soccer Ministries in Envisioning Current and Potential Professional Soccer Ministers

As noted, the envisioning process is of quintessential importance to the overall success of Professional Soccer Ministries. While Professional Soccer Ministries utilizes a mass-mailing to every Christian college soccer player in the United States each year, the actual percentage of those players who will respond and be capable of functioning as a professional soccer missionary is extremely low. Professional Soccer Ministries staff presents the ministry at over forty colleges and universities each year, and while this yields a greater number of potential qualified candidates than the mass-mailing, the return is still very limited. It is for this reason that the most effective means towards the envisioning of professional soccer ministers has proven to be the aforementioned short-term mission trips (tours) conducted by Professional Soccer Ministries.

Four tours were conducted by Professional Soccer Ministries from October 2003 through May 2006 and subsequent data was previously presented within this chapter. As one reviews the data provided from each tour the percentage of individuals that either joined Professional Soccer Ministries/Ambassadors in Sport or another vocational ministry is most notable. As suggested in table 5.1, fourteen players participated in the Sudan Tour. Of the fourteen participating players three were already working in some form of vocational ministry. Following the Sudan Tour seven players joined Professional Soccer Ministries/Ambassadors in Sport or another vocational ministry, thus if the three
players that were already working within vocational ministry prior to the Sudan Tour are excluded, seven of eleven players (64%) joined a vocational ministry following the tour.

As table 5.2 shows, sixteen players participated in the Thailand Tour. Of the sixteen participating players one was already working in some form of vocational ministry. Following the Thailand Tour nine players joined Professional Soccer Ministries/Ambassadors in Sport or another vocational ministry. Thus, if the one player that was already working within vocational ministry prior to the Thailand Tour is excluded, nine of fifteen players (60%) joined Professional Soccer Ministries/Ambassadors in Sport following the tour.

As table 5.3 shows, seventeen players participated in the Indonesia Tour. Of the seventeen participating players four were already working in some form of vocational ministry. Following the Indonesia Tour six players joined Professional Soccer Ministries/Ambassadors in Sport or another vocational ministry. Thus, if the four players that were already working within vocational ministry prior to the Indonesia Tour are excluded, six of thirteen players (46%) joined a vocational ministry following the tour following the tour.

As table 5.4 indicates, sixteen players participated in the Tajikistan Tour. Of the sixteen participating players ten were already working in some form of vocational ministry. Following the Tajikistan Tour two players joined Professional Soccer Ministries/Ambassadors in Sport or another vocational ministry. Thus, if the ten players that were already working within vocational ministry prior to the Tajikistan Tour are excluded, two of six players (33%) joined a vocational ministry following the tour following the tour.
In consideration of the four tours described and the percentage of players that joined Professional Soccer Ministries/Ambassadors in Sport or another vocational ministry following the tour (64%, 60%, 46%, 33%), it is concluded that twenty-four out of forty-five tour participants (53%) are envisioned in such a way that they join a vocational ministry following their Professional Soccer Ministries tour experience. These statistics confirm the assumed notion that tours are currently the most effective tool for the envisioning of potential professional soccer missionaries. While tours are then the most effective current tool for the envisioning of potential professional soccer missionaries, it is noted that this is just one source of envisioning potential, yet one of only three source currently utilized by Professional Soccer Ministries for the purpose of envisioning.

Acknowledging a deficiency in its potential to envision, Professional Soccer Ministries would like to develop other mediums by which current and potential professional soccer players are effectively envisioned towards the utilization of their profession for ministry and the ultimate glory of God. Professional Soccer Ministries would like to create a website to increase their global presence and potential to disseminate information rapidly. They also intend to publish and widely distribute the aforementioned professional sports ministry curriculum entitled *Competing for Glory: Revolutionizing Athletic Success* (Appendix 1). While the sports ministry curriculum may be useful on team and for certain motivated individuals, Professional Soccer Ministries recognizes the need for additional published material for the purpose of envisioning and training the potential professional soccer minister. It is for this reason that Professional Soccer Ministries intend to write a biography featuring the life of its
founder Aaron Tredway, and the concepts by which Professional Soccer Ministries was created from.

In addition, the proven success of the tours for the envisioning of potential professional soccer ministers leads Professional Soccer Ministries to believe it may be beneficial to conduct more tours each year. As tours are fairly involved and expensive, it would not be feasible to conduct more than two per year, yet the ability to conduct two tours per year could increase the number of envisioned and ultimately deployed individuals greatly. Over a four year period of time Professional Soccer Ministries conducted four tours. Thus, based on the data that suggests twenty-four individuals joined a vocational ministry following a Professional Soccer Ministries tour over a four year period, it can be assumed that if the statistics remain consistent, forty-eight individuals could potentially join a vocational ministry as a result of participating in a Professional Soccer Ministries tour within any given four year period, if they amount of tours were increased to two per year.

Analysis of the Effectiveness of Professional Soccer Ministries in Training and Resourcing Current and Potential Professional Soccer Ministers

As noted within the previous section addressing the analysis of the effectiveness of Professional Soccer Ministries in envisioning current and potential professional soccer ministers, there is no standardized tool for the analysis of a ministry of this nature. As a result, the analysis of the effectiveness of Professional Soccer Ministries in the training and resourcing of current and potential professional soccer ministers is not easily quantitatively addressed.
One may associate the percentage of individuals that respond in the utilization of professional soccer as a ministry to be indicative of the effectiveness of the Professional Soccer Ministries training and resourcing process. Yet, those individuals that participate in some form of Professional Soccer Ministries training, and those that respond in the utilization of professional soccer as a ministry are difficult to qualify. As Professional Soccer Ministries continues to create resources that seek to envision, train and resource professional soccer players towards a ministry through professional soccer, the more difficult it becomes to assess its effectiveness. This writer recognizes this quandary in analysis as a positive dilemma, yet for the purpose of this study some form of verifiable data must be analyzed. In light of this, the aforementioned data resulting from the Professional Soccer Ministries Academy in 2004 and 2005 will be utilized as the primary source of data for the analysis of the effectiveness of Professional Soccer Ministries in the training and resourcing of potential professional soccer ministers.

Professional Soccer Ministries Academy 2004: Analysis

The Professional Soccer Ministries Academy 2004 was very much a pilot project. This was the first year any formalized training program towards the development of professional soccer ministers was offered. As noted, the Academy was implemented through a partnership with Vanguard Ministries/ Cascade Surge soccer team that are owned and operated by Dave Irby. In assessment of this partnership, Professional Soccer Ministries learned the value of having a Premier Development League team (Cascade Surge) as a base for the Academy. This was due in part to the specific interns Professional Soccer Ministries attracted through the opportunity to participate in the Premier Development League. While the Premier Development League afforded
Professional Soccer Ministries the opportunity to attract potential professional soccer players, it limited the number of current professional players.

The three-month time period of the Academy proved to be adequate as participants spent four days per week serving within the community and met two nights per week to discuss the Professional Soccer Ministries training curriculum. One of the major objectives of the 2004 Academy was to establish solid relationships within the Salem, Oregon church community. Though the Surge had been in existence for 10 years, the owner had previously struggled to excite the church community participate and engage the ministry.

In addition to the individuals participating in the Academy, four unbelievers participated on the team. Throughout the course of the summer all four unbelievers made professions of faith. While this was a true highlight of the 2004 Academy several lessons were learned as well. It was learned that a more extensive assessment process needed to be implemented. In addition, a formalized training manual needed to be written and player-mentors established within the team. Several difficulties arose within the partnership between Professional Soccer Ministries/Ambassadors in Sport and Vanguard Ministries/Cascade Surge, most of which related to finance. A clearer financial policy needed to be developed to protect both organizations and ensure financial integrity within the overall Academy endeavor.

The Sports Ministry Training Course hosted by Ambassadors in Sport proved to be a fundamental element of the Academy. This course offered the Academy participants the opportunity to connect with the larger body of Ambassadors in Sport and the world of sports ministry beyond professional sports ministry. Participants were afforded the
opportunity to sit under some of the most progressive thinkers within the sports ministry world and potential for varying future service opportunities were revealed.

Though the 2004 Academy was filled with trial and error, the conclusion suggested great potential for the future training and resourcing of professional soccer ministers to assist the overall global vision and work of Ambassadors in Sport.

**Professional Soccer Ministries Academy 2005: Analysis**

The Professional Soccer Ministries Academy 2005 was entirely different than the 2004 Academy. Several improvements were made in light of lessons learned throughout 2004, and individuals brought into the program that offered additional leadership. The greatest difference from the 2004 to the 2005 Academy was the hiring of Martin Rennie as head coach. The 2004 head coach, Phil Wolf brought a number of positive attributes to the program, yet Martin proved to be invaluable in his service.

In light of the lessons learned in 2004, a more comprehensive assessment process was utilized and the standard of the program rose as a result. Several financial policies were setup, but finance continued to be a major issue between Vanguard Ministries/Cascade Surge and Professional Soccer Ministries/Ambassadors in Sport. These financial issues would ultimately lead to the cessation of the partnership in August 2005.

Another vital improvement in 2005 was the instatement of mentor-players. These players had attended the 2004 Academy and served overseas during 2004/2005 with Professional Soccer Ministries/Ambassadors in Sport. They brought additional experience and assisted the Professional Soccer Ministries training course through their intentional investment within specified first-time participants. Whereas Professional
Soccer Ministries was largely based on the experience of one individual, Aaron Tredway, prior to May 2005, the creation of mentor-players diversified the experiential knowledge base of the ministry and proved to assist the facilitation of the Academy’s objectives.

A major lesson learned within the 2005 Academy was the comprehension between 1st and 2nd year Academy participants. It would naturally follow that individuals with greater experience within a given field would possess greater knowledge of that given field, yet the 2005 Academy taught Professional Soccer Ministries that many Academy participants necessitated two years to comprehend the material covered within the Academy. Those individuals that attended the 2004 Academy and then were deployed overseas and returned for the 2005 Academy were best equipped for the ministry, yet those who returned for the 2005 Academy that were not deployed following the 2004 Academy evidenced further need for the training they received within the 2005 Academy. From this, Professional Soccer Ministries concluded that the target age for Academy participants would be 20-21 years old, or those who had just completed their 3rd year of college. Thus, if an individual entered the Academy at age 20 following the completion of their 3rd year of college, they would attend the Academy two consecutive years prior to being deployed as a professional soccer missionary.

Analysis of the Effectiveness of Professional Soccer Ministries in the Deployment of Professional Soccer Missionaries

Given the infancy of Professional Soccer Ministries the assessment of the effectiveness of its deployment can be either extremely simple or extremely complex. On the one hand, professional soccer missionaries have never been formally deployed by a missionary organization, thus the mere deployment of adequately envisioned, trained and
resourced professional soccer missionaries may be seen as success. Yet, it is a much more complex scenario when factors outside of the mere deployment of professional soccer missionaries are considered.

First, in consideration of the mere deployment of envisioned, trained and resourced professional soccer missionaries to minister in and through professional soccer, it can be concluded that Professional Soccer Ministries has been highly effective. This conclusion is made based on the number of professional soccer missionaries that have been deployed within a 20-month time period from September 2004 through May 2006.

It has been noted that Professional Soccer Ministries deployed eight vocational professional soccer missionaries within this 20-month time period. While the eight individuals previously accounted for within the deployment statistics of Professional Soccer Ministries are significant, the aforementioned statistics do not consider individuals that were deployed as Professional Soccer ministers within the United States, or those individuals that have been deployed but are yet to have departed for their field of assignment. If these two groups of individuals are included within the overall deployment statistics concerning Professional Soccer Ministries from September 2004 through May 2006, the total number of professional soccer missionaries deployed by Professional Soccer Ministries within that 20-month time period rises to 18, and an additional 6 Professional Soccer Ministries Associates. Thus, within a 20-month time period Professional Soccer Ministries contributed in the deployment of 24 missionaries to and through the world of professional soccer.

This writer feels the deployment of 24 professional soccer missionaries within a 20-month time period is a great success for a young ministry, yet it is also believed that

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255 Refer to table 5.5, 5.6 and see the “Joined AIS Staff” category.
the mere deployment of a professional soccer ministry does not adequately assess the effectiveness of the ministry’s overall deployment success.

Concerning the 8 professional soccer missionaries deployed internationally within the 20-month time period 4 missionaries left their field of deployment in less than one year. Of the 4 missionaries that left their field of deployment in less than one year, 2 terminated employment with Professional Soccer Ministries/Ambassadors in Sport following their brief international stint and 2 remained with Professional Soccer Ministries but became inactive staff members. In light of this, it may be suggested that Professional Soccer Ministries has either not successfully prepared its missionaries for the realities of the mission field or improperly maintained its missionaries following their deployment. This writer assumes responsibility for both possible reasons and feels these statistics negatively connote the effectiveness of Professional Soccer Ministries as a whole.

Analysis of the Overall Effectiveness of Professional Soccer Ministries

As consistently noted throughout the analysis of the varying aspects of Professional Soccer Ministries, it is difficult to assess the effectiveness of a ministry of this nature as there exists no standard by which to measure the ministry by. While no standardized tool for quantitative analysis currently exists, a qualitative analysis of the varying aspects of Professional Soccer Ministries has been suggested. Three major categories comprising Professional Soccer Ministries were considered, yet the overall effectiveness of Professional Soccer Ministries must also be considered.

Given the stated mission of Professional Soccer Ministries to saturate the world of professional soccer with the gospel of Jesus Christ and see all people participating in and
influenced by professional soccer become fully devoted followers of Christ, and its six-fold objectives, Professional Soccer Ministries’ effectiveness can be assessed. Previous to the inception and creation of Professional Soccer Ministries there was no means of formalized envisioning or training for potential professional soccer missionaries. While various sports ministries have been intentionally working with professional athletes for several years,\textsuperscript{256} the majority of these organizations have focused on the discipleship of professional athletes rather than the identification and empowering of professional sports ministers. As Professional Soccer Ministries intends to identify and empower professional sports ministers, specifically those individuals that can minister in and through the professional soccer world, its mere existence, mission statement and six-fold objectives suggest a certain level of benefit.

Yet, the true question of effectiveness pertains to Professional Soccer Ministries results: Are envisioned and empowered professional soccer players influencing those in and influenced by professional soccer to become fully devoted followers of Christ? While Professional Soccer Ministries has limited quantifiable data pertaining to the number of conversions directly associated with the ministry, the “saturation” of the professional soccer world with the gospel of Jesus Christ must be considered. Regardless of statistics concerning the number of conversions directly associated with and resultant of the work of Professional Soccer Ministries, on one level the ministry must be considered successful because of the 24 professional soccer missionaries that now intention to utilize professional soccer as a ministry for the ultimate glory of God. The

\textsuperscript{256} Organizations such as the Fellowship of Christian Athletes, Athletes in Action, Christians in Sport and Athletas De Cristo have been intentionally working in and through the professional sports world for many years. The aforementioned statement is not meant to belittle the efforts of any of the listed sports ministries or other organizations currently working with professional athletes.
influence of the four aforementioned tours must also be considered. While the influence Professional Soccer Ministries had through these tours is difficult to calculate, it is noted that over 10-million people watched the Professional Soccer Ministries team play the Sudan National team and heard testimony about Jesus Christ in an interview with team captain Aaron Tredway on the largest Muslim television network in the world, Aljazeera.\textsuperscript{257} Another estimated 40-million people spanning Central Asia watched the Professional Soccer Ministries team play the Tajikistan and Afghanistan National teams throughout the week long tournament held in Dushanbe, Tajikistan.

In conclusion Professional Soccer Ministries has been highly effective in its initial years of ministry. There are obviously major areas in which the ministry can further develop, yet the need for a ministry of this nature, and validity for its existence can be witnessed through the vast amount of people Professional Soccer Ministries and its associates have influenced within a relatively short period of existence. Professional Soccer Ministries is uniquely positioned and has the ability to engage culture as little else can. Soccer has the ability to transcend manifold barriers and bring people together. While professional soccer is not the only tool that engages culture and brings people together, it is a proven tool and subsequently offers the church an opportunity to combat secularism through the utilization of its medium.

\textbf{Summary}

Throughout this chapter this author has attempted to examine and analyze the implementation of Professional Soccer Ministries. The six-fold objectives were again reviewed and served as a foundation for the discussion of how those objectives are

\textsuperscript{257} For information concerning Aljazeera refer to http://english.aljazeera.net/HomePage.
practically applied within the ministry. The application of three major facets of Professional Soccer Ministries was discussed: Envisioning current and potential professional soccer ministers, training and resourcing current and potential professional soccer ministers and the deployment of professional soccer missionaries. A subsequent analysis of these three facets of Professional Soccer Ministries followed, and was concluded by analysis of the overall effectiveness of Professional Soccer Ministries. It was stated that while Professional Soccer Ministries remains in a relative state of infancy, it has experienced a certain level of qualitative success that potentially benefits the church as it offers the church an additional opportunity to effectively engage culture in such a way that they are compelled to become fully devoted followers of Christ.

Chapter six of this study will contain a summary of the major facets of this paper as it seeks to draw conclusions and make subsequent recommendations in response.
CHAPTER SIX

SUMMARY, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to provide a summary of the six major research problems stated within this study. As the summary is considered, recommendations for further study and potential considerations the church and Professional Soccer Ministries should make will be made. Conclusions will be drawn in light of the provided summary and subsequent recommendations.

Summary of the Six Research Problems

In this current era how does the process of secularization challenge the church worldwide?

As noted in chapter two, the modern church is positioned very differently from the church of generations past. Whereas a Christian worldview and a general acceptance of Christian ethics and belief were widely held within society during the expansive period of Christendom, Enlightenment thought, science, and philosophy facilitated a societal shift towards the secular beginning in the 18th century. Enlightenment thought brought about a general move away from God and divine revelation towards man and the human potential. As Noll suggests:

A new sense of the self as God-like in heroic potential captured the imagination of more and more influential Europeans . . . This sense of human boundlessness flourished in the English Romantic poets, it inspired Goethe in early periods of his vastly influential writing career, it drove the musical compositions of
Beethoven and Wagner, and it under girded the spectacular rise of the novel as the dominant form of European literature.\textsuperscript{258}

As noted, Enlightenment thought and the subsequent societal shift towards secularism did not entirely remove God from society, yet it served to marginalize Christian belief and its potential influence within society. The church of this modern era is experiencing the ramifications of Enlightenment thought and three successive centuries of secularization.

The church today is now an accepted entity within society, yet not always esteemed. Having shifted from modernity to postmodernity, the church is tolerated as a facet of individualism within society. Postmodernity has sought to embrace a multitude of differing belief systems in accordance with prevailing relativism, thus the Christian belief system is accepted as just one of many options held within society.

Relativism and individualism threaten the foundations of church as the church was not inceptively intentioned to operate as a facet of society, but rather to permeate all of society. As the process of secularization persists the church will only become more marginalized and removed from society. This is not only a problem outside the church, but the ramifications of secularism are seen within the church as prevailing societal thought intersects with Christian belief and results in a heterogeneous mix of biblical Christian belief and the “patterns of this world.”\textsuperscript{259}

\textsuperscript{258} Mark A. Noll, \textit{Turning Points: Decisive Moments in the History of Christianity} (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2000), 257.

\textsuperscript{259} Romans 12:2
In this current era how does globalization affect the church worldwide?

As noted in chapter two, the process of globalization has effectually served the purposes of secularization, yet globalization does not serve secularization exclusively. While globalization has aided the proliferation of secularism globally, it could just as easily be utilized to counter, and even reverse the process of secularization.

Globalization is defined as, “To make global in scope or application.” Just as globalization has served to “make global” the process of secularization, so it can serve to proliferate Christian belief and a worldview that is driven by God in all facets of life and society. This reality provides the church with opportunity to utilize the process of globalization for Kingdom purposes; a tool for the deconstruction of secularization.

In this current era how should the church respond to increased secularism in the wake of globalization?

As noted in chapters two and four, it is the belief of this writer that the church must respond to increased secularism in the wake of globalization by becoming missional. In light of the widespread societal influence of globalization, all that is local is converging with that which is global. This has resulted in what authors Ed Stetzer and David Putnman call the “glocal context.” Stetzer and Putman suggest that “people no longer think just locally; they think glocally.” Thus, global cultural diversity is being replaced by glocal diversity. Yet, it is pertinent to note that the constructs of diversity are marginalized by the very nature of the glocal context. The glocal context is then actually

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262 Ibid., 5.
causing diversity to become less diverse. This affords the church a prime opportunity to capitalize on this sociological phenomenon through the utilization of globalization for the proliferation of the gospel within the glocal context.

This writer suggests that the church will not be able to capitalize on the vehicle of globalization until it begins to empower its members as missionaries within the glocal context; a move towards the missional. The missional church is one that views members as missionaries to society within all walks of life. The missional church is one that forsakes the modern concept of members as ministers, operating under a “come-and-see” mentality, and moves towards the empowerment of members serving as missionaries in the places they find themselves within.

A move towards the missional involves the church incarnating society. Just as Jesus Christ incarnated humanity and left a model of incarnational ministry, so the church of this modern era must follow Jesus’ model of incarnational ministry and seek to incarnate the varying communities and contexts they have opportunity to influence. Author Neil Cole suggests, “The heart of our message [the message of the church] is that God didn’t expect us to come to Him in heaven. He came to us. He lived life on our terms and on our turf. He became incarnate.” So the church of this modern era must empower its members to go into the world and live life with the world in an effort to incarnate society and bring salvation to the people. This is not to suggest that the church is to become like the world, but simply to live with the world, on their terms and on their turf, that Jesus Christ might be preached and the tide of secularism reversed.

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In this current era how does soccer ministry relate to the church’s response to secularism in the wake of globalization?

As noted in chapter two, if the church desires to deconstruct rampant secularism within this modern era it must move beyond the church building into the lives and places where people dwell. One potential vehicle to move the church beyond its walls and into the lives and places where people dwell is sport. Sport is positioned to serve the church as an effective medium to engage culture in the wake of globalization.

For the purposes of this study soccer was presented as one sport that can facilitate the potential deconstruction of secularism as it is engaged by the church. As a result of soccer’s moral neutrality and its position within society, the church that empowers its members as missionaries in and through soccer has the opportunity to engage soccer culture within soccer culture. This is not a phenomenon unique to the soccer culture, yet soccer is utilized in this study to represent the potential to engage varying aspects of culture through the church’s intentional incarnating of those cultures. While soccer is suggested to be just one of many vehicles through which the church can incarnate and subsequently engage culture, it is also suggested to be one of the most effective in light of its global popularity and widespread appeal.

In this current era how does Professional Soccer Ministries consociate with the church’s response to secularization in the wake of globalization?

As noted in chapter four, and in light of the need for the suggested shift from the prevailing church mentality that empowers members as ministers towards the empowerment of members as missionaries, it is believed that professional soccer players can serve a unique role within the deconstruction of secularism. In light of the
globalization of soccer, its worldwide popularity, and the platform professional soccer creates for its participants, the church should intentionally seek to envision and empower its professional soccer members as missionaries in and through that profession. Professional Soccer Ministries directly consociates with the church’s response to secularism in the wake of globalization as the objective of each entities response is identical; the deconstruction of secularism in all things.

In this current era is Professional Soccer Ministries an effective tool of the church for the deconstruction of secularism?

As noted in chapter five, it is difficult to analyze the effectiveness of a tool such as Professional Soccer Ministries in light of the lack of quantifiable data and standardized assessment tools. Yet, as noted, the objective of Professional Soccer Ministries is to saturate the world of professional soccer with the gospel of Jesus Christ and see all people participating in and influenced by professional soccer become fully devoted followers of Christ. In light of this, it was concluded that Professional Soccer Ministries does serve as an effective tool of the church for the deconstruction of secularism given its successful history of mobilizing professional soccer missionaries (24 over a two-year period), and the exposure Professional Soccer Ministries projects have brought varying ministries and the gospel worldwide (over 50 million heard the gospel through Professional Soccer Ministries presence in Sudan and Tajikistan).

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264 It is again noted that FIFA, the governing body of soccer currently has more participating nations (207) than the United Nations (191).


**Recommendations**

1. The church should consider the implications of secularism *within* the church and how those implications affect the response of the church to secularism as a whole.

2. The church should consider the glocal context of emerging culture and the specific implications of the glocal reality upon each church’s current ministry strategy.

3. Further study should be given to the missional church strategy and assessment of the effectiveness of the missional church strategy.

4. Professional Soccer Ministries should seek to standardize a tool for the assessment of its effectiveness and seek to monitor its effectiveness in consociation with the church towards the deconstruction of secularism.

5. The implications of a biblical worldview that sees God permeate all facets of life and society should be considered by the church and instructed to its members.

6. The church should seek to empower its members to become missionaries in all of their given contexts of life.

**Conclusions**

The church of the 21st century finds itself in a unique position. While secular thought and practice prevail within this modern era, the church does have opportunity to turn-the-tide as it seeks to deconstruct secularism through the adoption of a missional strategy; a return to the apostolic approach to life and ministry.

The church enjoyed an extensive period of growth and acceptance from the time of Roman Emperor Constantine (4th century) into the Enlightenment (18th century). Though Enlightenment thought served to deconstruct Christendom and its implications
upon church and society, so can the church of the 21st century serve to deconstruct Christendom’s successor, secularism, through its intentional empowerment of its members as missionaries in society.

Just as Jesus Christ left an incarnational model of ministry through His intentional incarnation of humanity, so the church must follow that model and seek to incarnate society if it hopes to see God’s inceptive intention for His creation restored; the governance of God and His pervasiveness in all facets of life.

As the church seeks to incarnate society it must utilize its members to engage the varying cultures that exist. Noting soccer as one of the largest cultures of the world, the church must intentionally seek to empower its soccer inclined members to intentionally engage their culture as missionaries in and through the soccer culture.

Finally, the church must identify specific members such as professional soccer players, and utilize their unique platform for the deconstruction of secularism. If the church truly desires to reverse the effects of secularism, both within the church and within society, it must commit itself to calling people out to their true potential as God’s priests in the world.265

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APPENDIX A

BIBLICAL BASIS OVERVIEW FOR SPORTS MISSION.

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(Thanks to Rodger Oswald, Graham Daniels, Dr Greg Linville, Jon Ortlip, Tim Tucker and Jon Hamilton for their contributions to my thinking).

OBJECTIVES

• To identify the biblical texts which are being used as a foundation of the Christian understanding for sports mission. By sports mission this means anyone working in the world of sport, amongst sports people or using sport as a bridge for ministry.

• To be able to discern principles which provide God’s people with a biblical mandate to be involved in sports mission.

CONTENT

• 2 Timothy 3 v 10 - 4 v 8 Longevity Principle
• Heb 12, 1 Cor 9 etc Silence Principle
• Genesis 1 v 24 - 28 Creation Principle
• Exodus 35 v 4 - 35 Stewardship Principle
• Deuteronomy Worship Principle
• Proverbs 27 v 17 – 27 Wisdom Principle
• Psalms, Isaiah etc Newness Principle
• Romans 12 Sacrifice Principle
• 1 Corinthians 1 v 18 – 31 Foolish Principle
• 1 Corinthians 9 v 1 - 23 Liberty Principle
• 2 Corinthians 5 v 11 - 21 Reconciliation Principle
• Ephesians 4 v 1 - 16 Church Growth Principle
Please note the following:

Mission and evangelism principles are assumed to be inherent within sports mission and are considered when thinking about sports culture plus typical teaching on evangelism, discipleship and mission.

**CONTEXT.**

The church globally and historically has been slow to embrace sports mission. Typical reactions have been apathy or outright rejection of Christian involvement in sport. The tension seems to be that sports ministry is “too worldly for the church and too godly for sport.”

*Church* criticism has included that sports ministry is too:

i) Frivolous – too much fun to be taken seriously.

ii) Many bad experiences – injuries or not selected for the team.

iii) Much of a compromise usually worldly things for mission

iv) Controversial – violence, aggression, Sunday sport etc.

v) New – latest fashion that will not last.

vi) Works based for success – it is the opposite of Gospel grace.

*Sports world* criticism has included that Christians should not use sport for ministry because of:

i) Separation concept between sport and religion

ii) Change it requires in behaviour due to Christian influence

iii) The perception that Christians lose their sporting edge.

The following principles primarily seek to address Christians’ reservation for involvement in sport rather than the sports world criticisms.

1. **LONGEVITY PRINCIPLE (2Tim3v10 – 4v8).**

Participate in sports mission to endure and count for eternity. Authority comes from the fact that these are some of Paul’s last words to his spiritual son.

Therefore eternal focused sports mission needs to have:

a) Survived Problems (ch3v10 - 13)

b) Solid Platform (ch3v14 - 17)

c) Sound Priorities (ch4v1 - 5).
This is why we need biblical principles to be the backbone of sports mission.

**Epitaph** – ch4v6-8 Paul summarises his life with a sporting metaphor!! Therefore sport cannot be all that bad.

### 2. SILENCE PRINCIPLE (Heb12, 1Cor9, 2Tim2v5 etc).

There are a number of references to sport in the Bible providing metaphors to teach about concepts such as commitment, victory, being a winner, teamwork etc.

These verses alone are not a basis for a theology of sport or sports ministry. However sport is not condemned as sinful and the Bible is very explicit about what is sin. Therefore the Bible is silent on participation in sport. Hence sport is morally and ethically neutral therefore the morality of sport is determined by the heart of the participant not the activity itself.

### 3. CREATION PRINCIPLE (Genesis 1v24 – 28)

God’s work is creative therefore participation in sport and sports mission provides an opportunity to reflect the image of God by being creative.

This involves:

- a) **Plurality** (v24&25) – diversity and variety in activity.
- b) **Pinnacle** (v26&27) – humanity reflecting God’s image.
- c) **Purpose** (v28) – dominion, work and relationships.

God’s character in a Christian means that expression through sport and sports ministry could be good even very good in God’s eyes (v31). Reflect God in being imaginative thus demonstrating His image and fulfilling His purposes in and through sport.

“God made me for a purpose but He also made me fast and when I run I feel His pleasure.” (Eric Liddell, Chariots of Fire)

### 4. STEWARDSHIP PRINCIPLE (Exodus 35v4–35)

Sports mission can contribute to God’s building work. In Exodus 35, physical, natural and spiritual talents were used in the building process and it
is still the same now. God can even use physical sporting talent and inclination in His building work today.

Sports mission and participation can useful at these levels:

a) **Sacrificially** (v4-9) - Willingly giving in beauty and variety.

b) **Skilfully** (v10-29) - Using God given talents and abilities.

c) **Specially** (v30-35) – Application in teaching and training.

**Can we see Sport as gift from God?**

- Every good gift is given from God
- All gifts are to be used and enjoyed.

Can we say that musical gifts come from God, but speed, balance, coordination do not?

“The fact that the human body can hop, skip and jump 18 meters is testimony to what a great God we serve,”

Jonathan Edwards

5. **WORSHIP PRINCIPLE (Deuteronomy)**

Worship = ‘Worth-ship’ i.e. Give God worth in all that is done. This involves the whole of life, including sport. Christian’s words, ways and walk (ch4v10) should glorify God and be an act of worship.

**Sport: An opportunity to worship?**

- A definition of worship that just reflects singing worship songs on a Sunday is not enough.
- The Biblical view is a 7 day a week life style activity

Worship God in all things, including sport.

**The Role of Sports Ministry?**

Make better athletes or make better Christians? Not an either or issue. The answer is yes to both because walking with Christ means doing all to His glory (Colossians 3 v17).
6. WISDOM PRINCIPLE (Proverbs 27 v 17-27)

Use sport and sports ministry to sharpen up others spiritually, physically, educationally, mentally and socially.

**Competition** (ch27v17) = Striving together, to win, contend, rival, test ability etc => Improvement.

Let sport be an illustration and example of proverbs e.g. ch27v21 - What are the motives and attitudes that can be seen in the crucible of sports competition? God’s wisdom is practical, illustrative and to be experienced therefore sport is a viable tool to push others on into sharpness.

7. NEWNESS PRINCIPLE (Psalms and Isaiah)

Allow God to be God and see Him do new things in new ways.

Psalms 96v1, 98v1, Isaiah 42v10 calls on people to sing new songs
Isaiah 43v19 shows God doing a new thing and it is to be perceived.
Isaiah 65v17 God creates a new heaven and a new earth.
Jeremiah 31v31 shows God makes new covenants.
Matthew 9v14-17 new wineskins parable shows new ways of ministry.
John 13 v34 shows Jesus giving a new command to love one another.

Many Old Testament ideas of God doing new things are repeated in the New Testament. God has a proven track record of doing new things so why cannot God do a new thing in this time through sport?

1 Chronicles 12v32 ‘the men of Issachar who understood the times and knew what Israel should do.’ As a result these men transferred their allegiance from King Saul to King David because they saw what God was doing in their culture, time and generation. Is not God doing something in this time and generation through sport mission?

‘It is the task of every generation to discover what the sovereign Lord is doing and move in that direction’ Jonathon Edwards (the revival preacher not the triple jumper!!)
8. SACRIFICE PRINCIPLE (Romans 12)

v1 – ‘Offer your body as a living sacrifice’ – Demonstrate this on a sports field by being holy and pleasing unto God as part of spiritual worship.

Post fall parallels with Genesis 1 of being in God’s image, working and developing relationships. Giving God the use of a body in the sports culture is a reasonable way of thanking Jesus for that body.

v14–21 could have almost been written for Christian sports people on how they should respond to what goes on in the sports culture.

9. FOOLISH PRINCIPLE (I Corinthians 1v18-31)

v27&28 – God deliberately chooses foolish, weak, lowly, despised and insignificant things to advance His purposes and be glorified. Sport and sports mission could therefore come under this category.

v18–21 God’s message of the cross was considered to be foolish.

v22–25 God’s means can be a stumbling block to prevalent thinking.

v26–31 God’s method of using the foolish, means He is glorified.

God loves to use the ordinary and so called nobodies to do great things. God has a proven track record in the Bible to demonstrate this. Often Christians involved in sport are seen as despised or insignificant therefore there can be an expectancy of God doing great things.

It is a foolish message told by foolish people using foolish means to be received by the foolish – sums up sports mission perfectly!

10. LIBERTY PRINCIPLE (1 Corinthians 9v1-23)

Ch 9 – The apostle Paul is the example of freedom available in Christ for ministry to be used in the right way to be effective and glorify God. Can we not be free to participate in sport and ministry to glorify Christ?

How can people be free to minister through sports mission? Consider:

a) Results of sports mission (v1&2) – Rapid global growth.

b) Rights of sports ministers (v3-12a) – Sowing spiritual seed.
11. RENCONCILIATION PRINCIPLE (2 Cor. 5v11-21)

Reconciliation means ‘I want to be your friend’ and it is a process that takes place at many levels e.g. political, personal and spiritual – sport can be used in this godly purpose.

Ch 5v11-6v10 - Reconciliation was a key part of Paul’s ministry and sports mission has a reconciling role out of:

a) **Reverence** for God (v11-13) – Motivation for involvement.
b) **Resolve** of God (v14+15) – God’s loving action inspires us.
c) **Re-creation** of God (v16–21) – Be a live message of friendship.

v 20 “Ambassador” – Official, high ranking representative of God to this world. Why shouldn’t the sports world have such a representative?

A right relationship with God should lead to right living, right action and right ministry demonstrated on the sports field. There is a mandate to go and bring reconciliation. Why not to the pagan world of sport e.g. Matt 28v16–20, Mark 16v15, Luke 24v47, John 17v20 and Acts 1v8?

12. CHURCH GROWTH PRINCIPLE (Ephesians 4v1-16)

Growth is very much part of God’s plans - See it in nature, His parables and it is expected of His church. Sports ministry has a role to play in fulfilling the responsibility of helping the community of God to grow in quality and quantity.

Church growth through sports ministry will require unity in:

a) **Grace** (v1-3) – Worthy life demonstrating grace qualities.
b) **Grounding** (v4-6) – Sevenfold foundation for growth.
c) **Gifting** (v7-13) - Growing churches use peoples’ gifts
d) **Goal** (v14–16) – Maturity in Christ to be effective
Sports ministry can help in this growth process especially in terms of discipleship thus becoming an integral part of church life.

**CONCLUSION**

Sports ministry is a comparatively new concept and model for Christian ministry.

During its short life a number of issues have been raised that have led to controversy in terms of sports ministry being accepted as a valid Christian activity. However these 12 principles provide a valid Biblical (and therefore a God given) mandate for Christians to be involved in sport and sports mission.
APPENDIX B

Session One – Why do I play the game?

“For everything, absolutely everything, above and below, visible and invisible, rank after rank after rank of angels—everything got started in him and finds its purpose in him.”
Colossians 1:16 (The Message)

I. What do you think?

1. Why do you play the game: What sport/sports do you play and why?

2. Do you think life has a purpose?

3. What do you think your life’s purpose is?

II. My STORY

Do you remember how the game started for you? That day is forever etched within the very fabric of who I am. I was five years old when my dad first told me about SOCCER. As there was no professional soccer league in the States at that time, I had never seen soccer being played, let alone played it myself. On that fateful day my dad brought home a sweet pair of all-white pleather cleats, some cool pads he strapped on my legs and some bright yellow socks that rose high above the call of duty (Can you relate?!). Late that afternoon we hopped in the car and drove to soccer practice. At five years old I didn’t know what “soccer practice” was, but even the name…”soccer practice” sounded cool to me! Arriving at a local park, I’ll never forget my first vision of the game. As I remember it, thousands of kids were running around the park in a crazed frenzy of emotion and excitement. Many were screaming, most were chasing and some were kicking a ball or each other. As I watched, mesmerized by the images before me, I thought, “SOCCER, this is for me!” At some point between Billy tackling the neighbor girl and Caleb scoring on his own goal, I looked up at my dad and exclaimed, “This is what I’m going to do in life...SOCCER!”

Fast forward seventeen years, I’m 22 and I’ve just completed my first season as a professional soccer player. Life is good. I’m living the dream….or am I?

One day that off-season some of my good friends came to visit me at my parent’s house. We discussed a number of options for the day’s events but unanimously chose one….you guessed it….soccer! Coincidently, I found myself at the very same field I had began the game so many years before. The years had not diminished my zeal to play. As we stepped onto the damp grass
that December morning, I felt the same joy and anticipation I knew as a child. What would the game bring? What did it have in store for us? How would the game play out this day?

As the players readied themselves for action, I jogged the sideline with my teammate Justin. Justin and I were roommates all season and had become great friends as well. Arriving at the fields end we turned and prepared to jog back. Justin stopped for a moment and then began to walk. “What’s up bro?” I asked, now walking by his side. Justin replied, “Aaron, I feel like I was born to do these things. I was born to play this game. I was born to have this ball at my feet. I was born to score goals and entertain people with my soccer abilities!” I thought for only a moment and then exclaimed, “So was I!”

Kobe Bryant on purpose: (quoted from http://msn.foxsports.com/nba/story/5314632)

“In my life I have won and accomplished much. I own three NBA championship rings. I’ve had plenty of endorsement deals and made a lot of money from them. But still, I feel as if I have yet to fulfill the blessing that God has given me in my ability to play this game. I feel as if there is so much more to do, on the court and off it. I don't know if this is how I am supposed to feel. Did MJ, Magic and the others feel the same way? In our society it seems like athletes are expected to care about winning the game, pleasing the crowd, and signing deals. Period. But am I supposed to obsess myself with winning only to win, retire and wonder if all my sacrifices were worth it? Is it OK for me to sacrifice time away from my children, time watching them grow up, missing Easter, Christmas and other special moments, to win a ring?”

III. What’s the WORD?

Esther’s Story

This is the story of something that happened in the time of Xerxes, the Xerxes who ruled from India to Ethiopia—127 provinces in all. King Xerxes ruled from his royal throne in the palace complex of Susa… Now there was a Jew who lived in the palace complex in Susa. His name was Mordecai the son of Jair, the son of Shimei, the son of Kish—a Benjaminite. His ancestors had been taken from Jerusalem with the exiles and carried off with King Jehoiachin of Judah by King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon into exile. Mordecai had reared his cousin Hadassah, otherwise known as Esther, since she had no father or mother. The girl had a good figure and a beautiful face. After her parents died, Mordecai had adopted her…

The king, high on wine, ordered seven eunuchs who were his personal servants… to bring him Queen Vashti resplendent in her royal crown… but Queen Vashti refused to come… Seething with anger over her insolence, the king called in his counselors… He asked them what legal recourse they had against Queen Vashti for not obeying King Xerxes’ summons. “So, if the king agrees, let him pronounce a royal ruling and have it recorded in the laws of the Persians and Medes so that it
cannot be revoked, that Vashti is permanently banned from King Xerxes' presence. And then let the king give her royal position to a woman who knows her place.

When the king’s order had been publicly posted, many young girls were brought to the palace complex of Susa and given over to Hegai who was overseer of the women. Esther was among them. Hegai liked Esther and took a special interest in her. Right off he started her beauty treatments, ordered special food, assigned her seven personal maids from the palace, and put her and her maids in the best rooms in the harem. Esther didn’t say anything about her family and racial background because Mordecai had told her not to. When it was Esther’s turn to go to the king… Esther, just as she was, won the admiration of everyone who saw her…. The king fell in love with Esther far more than with any of his other women or any of the other virgins—he was totally smitten by her. He placed a royal crown on her head and made her queen…

Some time later, King Xerxes promoted Haman son of Hammedatha the Agagite, making him the highest-ranking official in the government… All the king’s servants at the King’s Gate used to honor him by bowing down and kneeling before Haman—that’s what the king had commanded. Except Mordecai. Mordecai wouldn’t do it, wouldn’t bow down and kneel… Day after day they spoke to him about this but he wouldn’t listen, so they went to Haman to see whether something shouldn’t be done about it. Mordecai had told them that he was a Jew. When Haman saw for himself that Mordecai didn’t bow down and kneel before him, he was outraged. Meanwhile, having learned that Mordecai was a Jew, Haman hated to waste his fury on just one Jew; he looked for a way to eliminate not just Mordecai but all Jews throughout the whole kingdom of Xerxes.

Esther called for Hathach, one of the royal eunuchs whom the king had assigned to wait on her, and told him to go to Mordecai and get the full story of what was happening. So Hathach went to Mordecai in the town square in front of the King’s Gate. Mordecai told him everything that had happened to him. He also told him the exact amount of money that Haman had promised to deposit in the royal bank to finance the massacre of the Jews… Mordecai sent her this message: “Don’t think that just because you live in the king’s house you’re the one Jew who will get out of this alive. If you persist in staying silent at a time like this, help and deliverance will arrive for the Jews from someplace else; but you and your family will be wiped out. Who knows? Maybe you were made queen for just such a time as this.”

Conclusion: Esther ultimately stands before King Xerxes on behalf of her people and the decree is reversed. Haman is hung on the gallows he had prepared for Mordecai and Mordecai is exalted to the second highest ranking official in the empire.

→ For more on Esther read her full story in The Message.

Historical Interesting

→ “Hadassah” was Esther’s Hebrew name. She was most likely given the Persian name “Esther” to conceal her Jewish identity.

→ Esther was a Jew living in exile in Susa. Exiled Jews would have been highly discriminated against by most Babylonians.
Orphans were highly discriminated against. Often viewed as the lowest members of society.

It was common Persian practice for the queen to be chosen via beauty contest.

Within the Persian court etiquette was key. No one was permitted to approach the king unless they were summoned and the punishment for entering without being summoned was death.

IV. **Fill it in and Speak it out**

1. Did Esther’s life have purpose?

2. How did Esther go from orphan to Queen (what specifics allowed this to occur)? To what or whom could she attribute her success?

3. What parallels can you draw between your life and the stories from today’s session?

V. **Pray in Response**

Session Two – Who created the game?

“For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.”

_Ephesians 2:10 (New American Standard Bible)_

I. **What do you think?**

1. How do you think sport began? Discuss examples for sport in general and the sports you specifically play.

2. How do you think life began (creation, evolution, big-bang, etc.)?

3. Do you think God cares about sports?

II. **My STORY**

Have you ever heard of G.R. Tweed? What sport do you suppose he played? Basketball? Football? Hockey? Golf? Actually, I’m not sure that G.R. Tweed was an athlete but he’s got a fascinating story!
G.R. Tweed was a member of the US Navy during World War II. Max Lucado writes, “Tweed had been hiding on Guam for nearly three years. When the Japanese occupied the island in 1949, he ducked into the thick tropical brush...preferring the swamp to the POW camp.” Though the jungle was inhospitable in every way, Tweed persevered through his hope of rescue.

One day Tweed was going about his daily survival routine when he noticed an American ship sailing slightly off the coast of the island. Could this be his savior? Would he finally be rescued? Tweed’s mind raced as he thought about how to contact the ship.

In fear that the Japanese would identify him through his efforts to make contact with the ship, Tweed knew his plan needed to be covert. After hours of strategizing he pulled a small mirror from his backpack and began reflecting the light of the sun. Dot-dot-dot. Dash-dash-dash. Tweed utilized the mirror to reflect the international code for help; someone on the ship noticed the reflection and Tweed was saved!

This is a fascinating story of personal survival and perseverance; a wonderful tale of one man’s struggle against all odds. Yet, what if Tweed didn’t have that mirror? Or, what if his mirror had refused to cooperate?

Lucado writes, “Suppose the mirror had resisted, pushed its own agenda. Rather than reflect a message from the sun, suppose it had opted to send its own. After all, three years of isolation would leave on starved for attention. Rather than sending an SOS, the mirror could have sent and LAM. “Look at me.”

“An egotistical mirror? The only crazier thought would be an insecure mirror. What if I blow it? What if I send a dash when I’m supposed to send a dot? Besides, have you seen the blemishes on my surface? Self-doubt could paralyze a mirror. So could self-pity. Been crammed down in that pack, lugged through jungles, and now, all of a sudden expected to face the bright sun and perform a crucial service. No way. Staying in the pack. Not getting any reflection out of me.”

I always thought becoming a professional athlete would satisfy my deepest desires. I figured professional sport would provide me with wealth, popularity and respect. While these may be derivatives of a professional sports career, I quickly realized they wouldn’t fill the void I felt in my life. More money? More popularity? More success? Was it more that I needed to satisfy my deepest desires?

One day I found myself standing on a dusty field in the middle-of-nowhere Africa. My team had played the top Zimbabwean professional soccer team the night before, but this day was about conducting a clinic in a rural village.
I couldn’t speak the village language, I didn’t know the village customs and I feared I had nothing to offer.

As I stood on the field skeptically awaiting the clinic’s start, I began to noticed my teammates interacting with the village children. They weren’t speaking. They weren’t listening. They were PLAYING! That day I learned that sport is the international language that transcends most barriers. Sport transcends socio-economic, racial, cultural and language barriers like little else can. As I played with the kids on that dusty African field, I thought, “Maybe I was allowed to play sport all these years for a reason?” “Could it be that I have certain passions and talents for a purpose?”

III. What’s the WORD?

Moses’ Story

One day Moses was tending the flock of his father-in-law, Jethro, the priest of Midian, and he went deep into the wilderness near Sinai, the mountain of God. Suddenly, the angel of the Lord appeared to him as a blazing fire in a bush. Moses was amazed because the bush was engulfed in flames, but it didn’t burn up. “Amazing!” Moses said to himself. “Why isn’t that bush burning up? I must go over to see this.”

When the Lord saw that he had caught Moses’ attention, God called to him from the bush, “Moses! Moses!” “Here I am!” Moses replied. “Do not come any closer,” God told him. “Take off your sandals, for you are standing on holy ground.” Then he said, “I am the God of your ancestors—the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.” When Moses heard this, he hid his face in his hands because he was afraid to look at God.

Then the Lord told him, “You can be sure I have seen the misery of my people in Egypt. I have heard their cries for deliverance from their harsh slave drivers. Yes, I am aware of their suffering. So I have come to rescue them from the Egyptians and lead them out of Egypt into their own good and spacious land. It is a land flowing with milk and honey—the land where the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites live. The cries of the people of Israel have reached me, and I have seen how the Egyptians have oppressed them with heavy tasks. Now go, for I am sending you to Pharaoh. You will lead my people, the Israelites, out of Egypt.” “But who am I to appear before Pharaoh?” Moses asked God. “How can you expect me to lead the Israelites out of Egypt?”

Then God told him, “I will be with you. And this will serve as proof that I have sent you: When you have brought the Israelites out of Egypt, you will return here to worship God at this very mountain.” But Moses protested, “If I
go to the people of Israel and tell them, ‘The God of your ancestors has sent me to you,’ they won’t believe me. They will ask, ‘Which god are you talking about? What is his name?’ Then what should I tell them?” God replied, “I Am the One Who Always Is. Just tell them, ‘I Am has sent me to you.’”

But Moses protested again, “Look, they won’t believe me! They won’t do what I tell them. They’ll just say, ‘The Lord never appeared to you.’” Then the Lord asked him, “What do you have there in your hand?” “A shepherd’s staff,” Moses replied. “Throw it down on the ground,” the Lord told him. So Moses threw it down, and it became a snake! Moses was terrified, so he turned and ran away. Then the Lord told him, “Take hold of its tail.” So Moses reached out and grabbed it, and it became a shepherd’s staff again. “Perform this sign, and they will believe you,” the Lord told him. “Then they will realize that the Lord, the God of their ancestors—the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob—really has appeared to you.” But Moses pleaded with the Lord, “O Lord, I’m just not a good speaker. I never have been, and I’m not now, even after you have spoken to me. I’m clumsy with words.”

“Who makes mouths?” the Lord asked him. “Who makes people so they can speak or not speak, hear or not hear, see or not see? Is it not I, the Lord? Now go, and do as I have told you. I will help you speak well, and I will tell you what to say.”

→ For more on Moses see Exodus 2

Historical Interesting

→ Traditionally Moses is the author of the first five books of the Hebrew Bible, also called "The Pentateuch" or the "Torah".
→ During the time of Moses’ birth Pharaoh ordered that all boys must be thrown into the Nile but the girls should be allowed to live.
→ Burning bushes were not uncommon within the Sinai Desert. They were a daily occurrence which often went unnoticed.
→ The custom of taking off one’s shoes was well known from the observances of the temple and was almost universally adopted by the ancients. The tradition is still retained in the East.
→ Eternal life is affirmed as God says, “I am (not I was) the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. God teaches Moses there is another world, strengthening Moses’ faith in a future state.
→ Moses was known to stammer and stutter in his speech, a trait that made him feel unworthy of representing his people before Pharaoh. His difficulty in speech was a natural result of such a long period of time in a foreign land and a difficulty experienced by several other shepherds of that day.
A snake was the symbol of royal and divine power on the diadem of every Pharaoh, therefore making the conversion of the rod a sign of victory over the king and gods of Egypt.

IV. Fill it in and Speak it out

1. What do today’s two stories suggest about life and purpose?

2. Moses seems like an unlikely hero. Why do you think God chose to use him to deliver the Israelites out of Egypt?

3. Do you think God can use your life like He used Moses’? If so, why?

V. Pray in Response

Session Three – Who’s invited to play the game?

“For while we were still helpless, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly... God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.”

Romans 5:6, 8 (New American Standard Bible)

I. What do you think?

1. If you were a coach how would you select your players? What criteria would you use (i.e. size, strength, determination, commitment, other)?

2. As an athlete, why do you think your coach choose you to play on the team?

3. Can you name any perfect athletes (i.e. perfectly suited for their game/flawless in their play)?

II. My STORY

Have you ever been sidelined, removed or prevented from playing the game? I suppose many athletes could empathize. Maybe it was a coaching decision, could have been an injury or possibly even a devious parental intervention that hindered your participation (don’t get all excited parents – that’s just our take!). While up to 60,000 spectators would often attend our games in Zimbabwe, most teams only paid the players if they won the game. Nearing the end of the season our team was playing CAPS United in the National Stadium. Most games were important but this game had the potential to
decide the championship. Win and we would likely win the league title; loose and it would be an uphill battle the rest of the season.

The stadium was at full capacity the day we played CAPS. Over 60,000 crazed Zimbabwean’s cheered both teams. Twenty-five minutes into the first half our team was loosing 0-3 when the coach looked down the bench and said, “Tredway, YOUR IN!” Players live to play the game but this was a less than ideal scenario.

Scoring one goal just before half-time our team began to claw its way back into the match. With just under ten minutes remaining we tied the game at 3-3 and the momentum had swung in our favor. Thoughts of victory and a league championship flooded my mind. With just under a minute remaining in the match, CAPS attacked down the left side of the field. Penetrating deep into our half their left midfielder crossed the ball to their on-rushing striker (who happened to be the league’s top scorer). Realizing we were about to loose the game (and our salary) I dove as hard and far as I could. Fully out-stretched I managed to get my left hand behind the ball just as the striker was kicking it into the goal. The ball shot strait up in the air, our defender headed it out of play and we ended up tying the game 3-3 (though we didn’t ultimately win the league title that year).

That was one of the most exciting games of my career, but I don’t often speak of it! You see, on the final play of the game, as I dove and put my hand behind the ball, the striker kicked the ball so hard that it tore most of the ligaments in my left shoulder. I went on from that game to have two major shoulder surgeries and spent the following 18-months in rehabilitation. I was removed from the game...big time!

Sport is what I do, its part of who I am. As I sat on the sideline all those months I longed to play; to be part of the game. I would have done anything to get back on the field but each day the doctors reminded me that I couldn’t play until I was healed.

I wouldn’t choose injury but I will say this: Knowing what its like to be excluded from the game makes me that much more appreciative of the opportunity I now have to play!

III. What’s the WORD?

Zacchaeus’ Story (NLT)

Jesus entered Jericho and made his way through the town. There was a man there named Zacchaeus. He was one of the most influential Jews in the Roman tax-collecting business, and he had become very rich. He tried to get
a look at Jesus, but he was too short to see over the crowds. So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore tree beside the road, so he could watch from there. When Jesus came by, he looked up at Zacchaeus and called him by name. “Zacchaeus!” he said. “Quick, come down! For I must be a guest in your home today.”

Zacchaeus quickly climbed down and took Jesus to his house in great excitement and joy. But the crowds were displeased. “He has gone to be the guest of a notorious sinner,” they grumbled.

Meanwhile, Zacchaeus stood there and said to the Lord, “I will give half my wealth to the poor, Lord, and if I have overcharged people on their taxes, I will give them back four times as much!” Jesus responded, “Salvation has come to this home today, for this man has shown himself to be a son of Abraham. And I, the Son of Man, have come to seek and save those like him who are lost.”

The Samaritan Woman’s Story (NLT)

Jesus learned that the Pharisees had heard, “Jesus is baptizing and making more disciples than John” (though Jesus himself didn’t baptize them—his disciples did). So he left Judea to return to Galilee. He had to go through Samaria on the way. Eventually he came to the Samaritan village of Sychar, near the parcel of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph. Jacob’s well was there; and Jesus, tired from the long walk, sat wearily beside the well about noontime.

Soon a Samaritan woman came to draw water, and Jesus said to her, “Please give me a drink.” He was alone at the time because his disciples had gone into the village to buy some food. The woman was surprised, for Jews refuse to have anything to do with Samaritans. She said to Jesus, “You are a Jew, and I am a Samaritan woman. Why are you asking me for a drink?” Jesus replied, “If you only knew the gift God has for you and who I am, you would ask me, and I would give you living water.” “But sir, you don’t have a rope or a bucket,” she said, “and this is a very deep well. Where would you get this living water? And besides, are you greater than our ancestor Jacob who gave us this well? How can you offer better water than he and his sons and his cattle enjoyed?” Jesus replied, “People soon become thirsty again after drinking this water. But the water I give them takes away thirst altogether. It becomes a perpetual spring within them, giving them eternal life.”

“Please, sir,” the woman said, “give me some of that water! Then I’ll never be thirsty again, and I won’t have to come here to haul water.”
“Go and get your husband,” Jesus told her. “I don’t have a husband,” the woman replied. Jesus said, “You’re right! You don’t have a husband—for you have had five husbands, and you aren’t even married to the man you’re living with now.”

“Sir,” the woman said, “you must be a prophet. So tell me, why is it that you Jews insist that Jerusalem is the only place of worship, while we Samaritans claim it is here at Mount Gerizim, where our ancestors worshiped?” Jesus replied, “Believe me, the time is coming when it will no longer matter whether you worship the Father here or in Jerusalem. You Samaritans know so little about the one you worship, while we Jews know all about him, for salvation comes through the Jews. But the time is coming and is already here when true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and in truth. The Father is looking for anyone who will worship him that way. For God is Spirit, so those who worship him must worship in spirit and in truth.”

Historical Interesting - Zacchaeus

→ Jericho was recently given over to the Palestinians. This barren land in the Jordan River Valley is now off-limits to Israelis. In Biblical times thousands of Israelis would visit the town on weekends, many drawn by a luxury hotel and casino.
→ While Zacchaeus’ exact height is unknown the average male height of the time was between 5’1 and 5’7 (and Zacchaeus was considered “short”).
→ Tax collectors were Jews who collected taxes from fellow Jews on behalf of the Roman Empire. Tax collectors made their living by over charging those they collected from.
→ The Jews viewed Zacchaeus as a sinful renegade.
→ Abraham was not really Zacchaeus’ father. Jesus called Zacchaeus “a son of Abraham” to illustrate the two men’s shared faith and salvation.

Historical Interesting - The Samaritan Woman

→ The village of Sycar or "Shechem" was roughly thirty-four miles from Jerusalem. It is now called “Nablous” and is home to 700 Samaritans.
→ Samaritans are both a religious and ethnic group and were considered mongrels, half breeds to the Jews. In 2005 there were only about 700 Samaritans remaining.
→ The well from which Jesus asked for a drink is said to be 100 feet deep.
→ A prophet is one who can understand another’s life. The word does not mean, one who foretells future events, but one who knows another’s heart and life.
Samaritan’s received the five books of Moses, yet they rejected the prophets and did not have respect for the true God. In addition, their faith incorporated idol worship.

Jesus refers to ‘true worshippers,’ meaning those who truly and sincerely worship God, using their heart, mind and soul to worship.

IV. Fill it in and Speak it out

1. If Zacchaeus and the Samaritan woman were athletes, and God was a coach, why do you think He chose them to play on His team?

2. Based on the stories of Zacchaeus and the Samaritan woman how do you think God feels about you?

3. Players often play for the fans, their coach or teammates. Do you think it’s possible to play for God? If so, how?

V. Pray in Response

Session Four – Where’s the game played?

“Don’t copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will know what God wants you to do and you will know how good and pleasing and perfect his will really is.”

Romans 12:2 (The New Living Translation)

I. What do you think?

1. Do you have any habits or behaviors which characterize you? If so, discuss a habit or behavior you have.

2. How do you feel behaviors or habits are formed?

3. Do you feel society influences the way you think or view certain things? If so, how?

II. My STORY

Growing up Christmas was always my favorite day of the year. Presents, food, no school….you’ve gotta admit, Christmas is a pretty sweet holiday!

Do you remember the best present you ever received? Over the years I’ve received some pretty cool gifts but there’s one I remember above all the rest.
I was probably 12 or 13 when all my friends started getting TV’s in their rooms. While I probably didn’t need a TV in my room, the fact that it seemed everyone else had one, made me feel I couldn’t live without.

I began dropping hints to my parents around…JULY…employing a highly non-subtle strategy in the months leading up to Christmas. While my parents didn’t really seem so enthusiastic about getting me a TV that year, I figured they’d surely come around in the end.

I remember that Christmas morning vividly. I woke up early and made a B-line for the Christmas tree – there it was, a 32-inch box…what else could it be? As I tore into that Christmas package, I had already decided where I would put the TV in my room. Removing the wrapping paper the exterior of the 32-inch box read, “Coleman Two-Man Camping Tent.” Not wanting to outwardly show my disappointment, I continued to rip into the box thinking it must have been some kind of cruel joke. Surely my parents had placed the television within the Coleman camping tent box right?

As I removed the final layer of packaging, sure enough, there was the “Coleman Two-Man Camping Tent!” I couldn’t believe it. Not being able to control my disappointment any longer, I shouted, “A TENT?” “Who wants a TENT?” “I don’t want a TENT…I want a TELEVISION!”

In what has become one of my worst childhood memories, I threw the tent on the ground, ran to my room and began screaming, “I HATE THAT STUPID TENT!” “I HATE IT!!!”

I’m sure you’ve never acted so immature. I’m not proud of that moment but I’ve realized it happens more often than I think. As an athlete I frequently get certain ideas in my head about the best way to train or what it may be like to achieve a certain goal. As I’ve progressed in my athletic career I’ve realized that training methodologies are always changing and things very rarely turn out exactly as I had envisioned they would (that’s not always a bad thing either).

In session 1 we discussed my assumption that the derivatives of a professional sports career (money, popularity, respect) would meet my deepest desires, and my realization that they don’t. Much like the belief that I needed a TV in my room that Christmas, it seems I often strive after things that won’t really satisfy. Why is this? Where do these thoughts and desires come from? While I don’t have all the answers yet, I’m comforted to know I’m a work in process. I think I agree with Richard Bach who writes, “You are not the child of the people you call mother and father, but their fellow-adventurer on a bright journey to understand the things that are.”
During the third year of King Jehoiakim’s reign in Judah, King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon came to Jerusalem and besieged it with his armies. The Lord gave him victory over King Jehoiakim of Judah. When Nebuchadnezzar returned to Babylon, he took with him some of the sacred objects from the Temple of God and placed them in the treasure-house of his god in the land of Babylonia.

Then the king ordered Ashpenaz, who was in charge of the palace officials, to bring to the palace some of the young men of Judah’s royal family and other noble families, who had been brought to Babylon as captives. “Select only strong, healthy, and good-looking young men,” he said. “Make sure they are well versed in every branch of learning, are gifted with knowledge and good sense, and have the poise needed to serve in the royal palace. Teach these young men the language and literature of the Babylonians.” The king assigned them a daily ration of the best food and wine from his own kitchens. They were to be trained for a three-year period, and then some of them would be made his advisers in the royal court.

Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah were four of the young men chosen, all from the tribe of Judah. The chief official renamed them with these Babylonian names:

Daniel was called Belteshazzar.

Hananiah was called Shadrach.

Mishael was called Meshach.

Azariah was called Abednego.

But Daniel made up his mind not to defile himself by eating the food and wine given to them by the king. He asked the chief official for permission to eat other things instead. Now God had given the chief official great respect for Daniel. But he was alarmed by Daniel’s suggestion. “My lord the king has ordered that you eat this food and wine,” he said. “If you become pale and thin compared to the other youths your age, I am afraid the king will have me beheaded for neglecting my duties.”

Daniel talked it over with the attendant who had been appointed by the chief official to look after Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah. “Test us for ten days on a diet of vegetables and water,” Daniel said. “At the end of the ten days, see how we look compared to the other young men who are eating the...
king’s rich food. Then you can decide whether or not to let us continue eating our diet.” So the attendant agreed to Daniel’s suggestion and tested them for ten days.

At the end of the ten days, Daniel and his three friends looked healthier and better nourished than the young men who had been eating the food assigned by the king. So after that, the attendant fed them only vegetables instead of the rich foods and wines. God gave these four young men an unusual aptitude for learning the literature and science of the time. And God gave Daniel special ability in understanding the meanings of visions and dreams.

When the three-year training period ordered by the king was completed, the chief official brought all the young men to King Nebuchadnezzar. The king talked with each of them, and none of them impressed him as much as Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah. So they were appointed to his regular staff of advisers. In all matters requiring wisdom and balanced judgment, the king found the advice of these young men to be ten times better than that of all the magicians and enchanters in his entire kingdom.

King Nebuchadnezzar made a gold statue ninety feet tall and nine feet wide and set it up on the plain of Dura in the province of Babylon. Then he sent messages to the princes, prefects, governors, advisers, counselors, judges, magistrates, and all the provincial officials to come to the dedication of the statue he had set up. When all these officials had arrived and were standing before the image King Nebuchadnezzar had set up, a herald shouted out, “People of all races and nations and languages, listen to the king’s command! When you hear the sound of the horn, flute, zither, lyre, harp, pipes, and other instruments, bow to the ground to worship King Nebuchadnezzar’s gold statue. Anyone who refuses to obey will immediately be thrown into a blazing furnace.” So at the sound of the musical instruments, all the people, whatever their race or nation or language, bowed to the ground and worshiped the statue that King Nebuchadnezzar had set up.

But some of the astrologers went to the king and informed on the Jews. They said to King Nebuchadnezzar, “Long live the king! You issued a decree requiring all the people to bow down and worship the gold statue when they hear the sound of the musical instruments. That decree also states that those who refuse to obey must be thrown into a blazing furnace. But there are some Jews—Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego—whom you have put in charge of the province of Babylon. They have defied Your Majesty by refusing to serve your gods or to worship the gold statue you have set up.”

Then Nebuchadnezzar flew into a rage and ordered Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego to be brought before him. When they were brought in, Nebuchadnezzar said to them, “Is it true, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, that you refuse to serve my gods or to worship the gold statue I have set up? I will give you one more chance. If you bow down and worship the statue I
have made when you hear the sound of the musical instruments, all will be well. But if you refuse, you will be thrown immediately into the blazing furnace. What god will be able to rescue you from my power then?”

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego replied, “O Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to defend ourselves before you. If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God whom we serve is able to save us. He will rescue us from your power, Your Majesty. But even if he doesn’t, Your Majesty can be sure that we will never serve your gods or worship the gold statue you have set up.”

→ For more on Daniel and his friends see the Old Testament book of Daniel

Historical Interesting

→ Daniel and friends were forced to assimilate into Babylonian culture. This was a three year process in which they studied language, agriculture, architecture, astrology, astronomy, law, and mathematics.
→ Daniel refused the royal food because it had been sacrificed and offered to pagan gods.
→ The exact dates of Jehoiakim’s reign are difficult to identify as the Jewish calendar began in the fall and the Babylonian calendar began early spring.
→ Ashpenaz was chief of the court officials. Some commentators point out that the word for official also means eunuch. It is then reasonable to think Ashpenaz was not only an official but a eunuch.
→ Nebuchadnezzar confessed a belief in God but he worshipped idols as well.
→ The Jews were the only people who acknowledged one God. Most Babylonian’s were comfortable offering homage to gods of any people or country. Thus, they had no problem obeying Nebuchadnezzar’s message to worship his golden statue.

IV. Fill it in and Speak it out

1. What were some societal messages/pressures of Daniel’s day? How did Daniel and his 3 friends respond?

2. Do you think God has anything to do with your worldview or the way you think about life? Why or why not?

3. Roman 12:2 suggests that you should “let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think.” Why should you do this? How is this possible?

V. Pray in Response
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