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Chapter 1 Sports and Christianity: Mapping the Field

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Introduction

> *Sport seduces the teeming 'global village'; it is the new opiate of the masses; it is one of the great modern experiences … sport is a mirror … that reflection is sometimes bright, sometimes dark, sometimes distorted, sometimes magnified. This metaphorical mirror is a source of mass exhilaration and depression, security and insecurity, pride and humiliation, bonding and alienation. Sport, for many, has replaced religion as a source of emotional catharsis and spiritual passion … the story of modern sport is the story of the modern world … sport demands the attention of the academic.*
>
> (Mangan, Majumdar and Dyreson, 2009: vii-viii)

Scholars who have written on the relationship between sport and Christianity are in general agreement that academics outside the traditional social-science sports studies disciplines[1], such as theologians and philosophers of religion, have been slow to recognise the cultural significance of modern sports (e.g., Watson, 2011a; Hoffman, 2010a; Twietmeyer, 2009, 2008). As this review demonstrates, this trend is slowly changing. In addition to the birth of research centres, academic journals and Church based sport-faith initiatives, the contributors to recent monographs and anthologies that analyse the various aspects of the relationship

between the Christian religion and sport now include scholars from across a plethora of disciplines and denominations (see appendix 1).[2]

Historians and anthropologists have mapped a relationship between religion and sport that spans approximately 3000 years and many of the more recent scholarly examinations of the dialectical relation between sports and Christianity are indebted to this work. Links between the sacred and sport have been identified in a number of historical epochs. These include primitive times when ritual-cultic ball-games were played to appease the gods (for fertility), the athletic spectacles of ancient Greece and the Olympic games that were held in honour of mythological deities, the gladiatorial contests of Rome, the festivals and folk-games of the Middle-ages, the general Puritan suspicion and prohibitions against sports, and lastly, Victorian muscular Christianity (1850-1910), a socio-theological movement, and some would argue ideology, that significantly shaped the character of modern sports (see, McLeod, 2012; Koch, 2012; Baker, 2010, 2007a, 1988; Lipoński, 2009; Mathisen, 2005; Guttman, 1978/2004; Coleman, 1989; Carter, 1984,a,b; Eisen, 1975; Ballou, 1973; Brasch, 1970)[3]. Additionally, there is a small corpus of work that have that has explored how sport interacts with other monotheistic and eastern (pantheistic) world religions, such as Islam, Judaism, Buddhism and Shintoism, which provide useful comparative insights for scholars examining the Christian faith and sport relation (e.g., Benn, Dagkas and Jawad, 2011; Benn, Pfister and Jawad, 2010; Meyer, 2009; Hargreaves, 2007; Magdalinski and Chandler, 2002; Prebish, 1993; Hyland, 1990).

Considering Christianity's Hebraic roots in the old testament and its inseparable ties to Jewish history, faith and tradition, the discourse that is fast-developing around

Judaism and sporting pursuits will undoubtedly assist scholars when examining the relationship between sports and Christianity, especially in relation to historical, theological and sociological research on gender, embodiment and identity (e.g., Borish, 2009, 2002; Kaufman and Galily, 2009; Mendelsohn, 2009; Meyer, 2009; Kugelmass, 2007; Gurock, 2005; Eisen, 1998). From this point forward, however, we focus on systematically (and thematically) reviewing the empirical research and scholarship on sport and Christianity.[4] While unavoidably touching on aspects of the sport-faith relationship throughout the last two millennia to ensure that we historically and culturally situate our analysis,[5] the over-riding focus is the modern forms of sport that were birthed in Victorian Britain in the middle-to-late part of the nineteenth century (1850-1910). The review comprises four themed sections[6]: (i) theologies of play in sport (ii) muscular Christianity and sports ministry (iii) theological ethics in sport (with psychological considerations), and (iv) emerging research topics. In turn, the review is prefaced by a brief overview of pioneering scholars and initiatives in the field and an outline of the aims and the methodological approach.

Aims and Method

The aim of this systematic literature review is to: (i) comprehensively identify, critically appraise and synthesise scholarship (in English),[7] primary empirical research and initiatives (e.g., research centres and organisations) concerning the relationship between sport and Christianity, and (ii) to identify areas for future research and to provide related resources. Whilst not exhaustive[8] the review identifies key debates, seminal articles and scholarly texts and initiatives, allowing the reader to further explore specific themes of interest. This review adopts a ‘systematic approach’, although as the topic sits within the social sciences, it does

not adhere to the stringent requirements of the *Cocharne Collaboration* format of a systematic review (Aveyard, 2008).

Pioneering Scholars and Initiatives in the Field[9]

Until relatively recently, the majority of academic reflection on the relationship between sport and Christianity, has come from American scholars. During the post-war years of the 1960s, amidst a swathe of civil and human rights movements the United States were reassessing and critiquing all its major institutions in one form or another, which included sports. In this era sports became increasingly professionalized and driven by free-market capitalist forces and political agendas, and thus, were ripe for social-scientific and theological analysis. While the pioneers in this particular field had only a small number of isolated writings published in Church periodicals (McNeill, 1948; Brasch, 1970; Anderson, 1925)[10] and popular sports magazines (Deford, 1976,a,b,c,d, 1986), as academic journal papers, chapters and books[11] and popular Christian literature (Peale, 1957), which included an edited collection (Simonson, 1962) of testimonies from athletes that were associated with the *Fellowship of Christian Athletes* (FCA, 1952/54-), it was Michael Novak's seminal book, *The Joy of Sports* (1967/1994), that provided the foundation for what was to follow.

Novak's book was the first systematic study of the sport-faith interface.[12] Since then, Novak has made numerous conference presentations on the topic, published a small number of articles in periodicals and has recently written the *Foreword* to an edited anthology on sports and Christianity (Watson and Parker, 2012a). Due to his wider professional interests and

responsibilities,[13] however, he has not produced any further in-depth scholarly analyses. One of the chapters from his ground-breaking book was re-published in Shirl Hoffman's edited anthology on sport and religion, the first of its kind.

Shirl J. Hoffman, a retired professor of kinesiology at the University of North Carolina (Greensboro, USA) and former college basketball coach and official, started his work on sport and the Christian faith with a handful of academic papers (Hoffman, 1991, 1986, 1985, 1976), then published the first edited anthology on the topic in 1992(a), which includes contributions from other pioneers in the field (i.e., Novak, Higgs, Price and Mathisen).[14] Following nearly four decades of engagement in the field he recently published a single-authored text, *Good Game: Christianity and the Culture of Sports* (Hoffman, 2010a)[15] which is essentially a representation of his life's work.[16] Hoffman has been successful in disseminating his ideas in the media, regularly contributing to documentaries televised on networks such as CBS, ESPN, and Channel 4 in Britain, and to radio broadcasts for the BBC, CBS and NPR. Robert (Jack) Higgs, a chapter contributor to Hoffman's anthology, has also been a leading authority on the topic over the last three decades.

The first scholarly contribution of Higgs, a retired English literature professor at East Tennessee State University (USA) was a book which examined sport and religion (Christianity) in classic American literature (Higgs, 1981). This was followed by a review of 'Philosophy and Religion' in sports that includes an extensive bibliography (Higgs, 1982), and which has subsequently been updated and revised (Deardorff, 2000). After publishing further related chapters and articles (e.g., Higgs, 1990, 1985, 1983), he produced a monograph, *God in the Stadium: Sports and Religion in America* (Higgs, 1995), that was

highly critical of the American sports institution, while championing the good of sport *per se*. This text has been widely cited in the related literature and was formed the basis of over 85 conference and invited presentations by Higgs. A co-authored book followed (Higgs and Braswell, 2004) that covered a wide-range of literary, theological, sociological and philosophical themes. Most recently, Higgs has written on archetypes and stereotypes in religion and American sports (Higgs, 2012). Another prolific scholar in the field is Joseph L. Price.

Price, a professor of Religious Studies at Whittier College (USA), is the editor of the 'Sports and Religion' book series for Mercer University Press and a text (Price, 2001a) on the religious aspects of American sports and their manifestation as a 'civil or surrogate religion'. He has also produced a monograph entitled, *Rounding the Bases: Baseball and American Religion* (Price, 2006). While, Price has published on a range of topics in the area (e.g., Price, 2009, 2007, 2002, 2001b, 1996; 1984, 1991, 1994), his corpus of work is more focussed and specific than the broad-ranging analysis of the sports and Christianity relationship provided by Hoffman and Higgs, in that his primary research interests are American baseball and football adopting mainstream sociological theories and the tools of religious studies to analyse his subject matter. In addition to Novak, Hoffman, Higgs and Price, two other scholars, William J. Baker and James Mathisen, have also made significant inroads into the scholarly investigation of the sport-faith relationship.

The major contribution of Baker, an emeritus historian at the University of Maine, (USA), is his scholarly and yet accessible socio-historical analysis of the American modern sports institution, *Playing with God* (Baker, 2007a). This was preceded by his

book provocatively entitled, *If Christ Came to the Olympics* (Baker, 2000a) that is particularly useful for those wanting to critically analyse modern Olympia. He has also published on the socio-cultural movement of Victorian muscular Christianity (Baker, 2000b) and the historical relationship between western sports and religion (Baker, 2010, 1988). In this vein, the key area of expertise of Mathisen, a retired sociologist of religion at Wheaton College (USA), is muscular Christianity in American culture, while he has also published on sport and religion, Pauline athletic metaphors and the evolution and development of sports ministry organizations (Mathisen, 2005, 2002, 2001, 1998, 1994/2006, 1990). His co-authored book with Tony Ladd, *Muscular Christianity: Evangelical Protestants and the Development of American Sport* (1999) is his most well-known, and for some practitioners of 'sports ministry', a controversial work. One of Mathisen's (1994/2006) earlier contributions on muscular Christianity was published in a book that comprised papers from the annual American conference (1989-) of the *Christian Society for Kinesiology and Leisure Studies* (CSKLS), which until recently was the only professional scholarly organisation to focus on sport and the Christian faith (see appendix 1).

CSKLS was officially launched in 2002 but its roots go back to 1989 when Glen Van Andel, a professor of recreation (now retired) at Calvin College, USA, founded the annual Symposium on Christianity and Leisure Studies. Tom Visker, a professor of sport and physical education (Bethel College, USA) and Paul Heintzman, a professor of leisure studies (University of Ottawa, Canada) both attended the 1989 conference, and along with Van Andel, played key roles in the early development of this organization. In the early years of the annual symposium there was a focus on leisure and recreation studies, and the first book of papers from the conferences titled, *Christianity and Leisure: Issues in a Pluralistic Society*

(Heintzman, Van Andel, and Visker, 1994/2006), reflects this. During the mid-1990s the overall scope of the organization extended to kinesiology[17] and a second book of conference papers reflects this sports emphasis, entitled, *Physical Education, Sports, and Wellness: Looking to God as we Look at Ourselves* (Byl and Visker, 1999). The significance of CSKLS as a 'pioneering organisation' is further supported by the fact that both Hoffman (1994/2006) and Mathisen (1994/2006) have contributed chapters to these edited collections. Hoffman delivered invited keynote presentations at the 1991 and 2010 CSKLS conferences, while Mathisen has presented papers at the event on more than one occasion. With the recent launch of a professional journal, the *Journal of the Christian Society for Kinesiology and Leisure Studies* (2010-), CSKLS continues to be an important vehicle for research and scholarship in the field. The pioneering work of CSKLS and the scholars noted above, excluding Novak as a catholic, have a strong protestant theological focus. This, however, does not mean that the Catholic Church and community of scholars have not passionately engaged in reflecting upon sport and religion.

Until recently, Novak's (1967/1994) influential book has stood alone as the only systematic analysis of sport and the catholic faith in the English language. That said, scholars from Germany, Italy and Poland have contributed to such debates in their own languages, often in the form of documents written at the national level by the country's catholic bishops. Recently, however, and especially during the last decade, there have been a growing number of academic texts (e.g., Lixey et al., 2012; Lixey, 2012a,b; Kelly, 2012a,b; O'Gorman, 2010a; Sing, 2004; Feeney, 2006, 1995; Baum and Coleman, 1989; Ryan, 1986), empirical studies (Hastings and DelleMonache, 2007; Hastings *et al*., 2006), scholarly essays,[18] sports coaching books (Costantini and Lixey, 2011; Penrice, 2009; Yerkovich and Kelly, 2003; Brown et al., 2006) and a

special edition of the periodical, *New Catholic World* (1986, July-August). These have undoubtedly been driven by the Pontificate of John Paul II, which we would argue has been as significant for the catholic community as the body of work developed by the protestant thinkers described above.

Building on the work of his predecessor, Pope Pius XII, who addressed numerous catholic sport associations, John Paul II, who in his earlier life was a passionate sportsman (i.e., football goalkeeper, skier and mountain climber, see Feeney, 2006, 1995), held two international sport gatherings in Rome's Olympic stadium speaking no less than 120 times on the subject, addressing Olympic committees and able- and disabled athletes (Müller and Schäfer, 2010). The launch of the 'Church Sport' office within the Pontifical Council for the Laity in 2004, led by Father Kevin Lixey, is arguably the most significant outcome of the long-held enthusiasm of the Holy See for sport, culminating in the pontificate of John Paul II. To date, this new Office has held three international seminars at the Vatican, each of which has had a specific focus: (i) chaplaincy (ii) evangelism, and (iii) mission and education in sport. These events have resulted in the publication of three books (Liberia Editrice Vaticana, 2011, 2008, 2006). Most recently, Pope Benedict XVI, while on a state visit to Great Britain (and in addition to his own reflections on the sports-world, see Clemens, 2009), launched *The John Paul II Foundation for Sport* (2008-), safeguarding the enduring legacy of his predecessor. A central historical motif of catholic discourse on sports and faith is the need to emphasise the joyful, festive and intrinsically playful nature of sport, a topic that is at the heart of the field and to which we now turn.

Theologies of Play in Sport

> I wonder whether it is possible (it almost seems so today) to regain the idea of the Church as providing an understanding of the area of freedom (art, education, friendship, play), so that Kierkegaard's "aesthetic existence" would not be banished from the Church's sphere, but would be re-established within it?
>
> Dietrish Bonhoeffer (1944)[19]

Over the past eighty years the study of the human impulse to play has entertained scholars from a wide range of academic disciplines and was a topic that the ancient Greek philosophers, Plato (424-348b.c) and Aristotle (384-322b.c), acknowledged as integral to human (and animal) experience (Ardley, 1967). Most of the academic work published on sport and the Christian religion that are cited in this review, discusses to varying degrees the role of play in modern sport, and, in particular the lack of playfulness, a historical process that Guttman (1978/2004) describes as the 'ludic diffusion'. These reflections are, however, rooted in literature that emanates from a number of social science disciplines.

Empirical research and scholarly essays that analyse play, often with a link to games and organized sports, have come from the disciplines of psychology (e.g., Csikzentmihalyi, 1975a,b), education (e.g., Piaget, 1951), cultural anthropology (Geertz, 1973)[20], sociology (e.g., Gruneau, 1980; Berger, 1970, 1967; Mead, 1934), the philosophy and social study of sport (e.g., Schmid, 2011; Giamatti, 1989/2011; Morgan and Meier, 1995, Section1: 1-66; Hoffman, 1994/2006; Oriard, 1991; Higgs, 1990; McIntosh, 1979c), history (e.g., Eisen, 1991; Huizinga, 1950), biological and physical anthropology (Sands and Sands, 2010; Burghardt, 2005; Bekoff and Byers, 1998), leisure studies (e.g., Heintzman, 2006, 2003b; Heintzman, Van Andel and Visker, 1994/2006; Hoffman, 1994/2006; Ryken, 1987; Holmes, 1981; Pieper, 1948/1998)[21], evolutionary theory (Caroll, 2000) and most importantly here,

theology. The foundational study of play by Dutch cultural historian, Huizinga (1950), has provided a starting point for a number of scholars wishing to explore the relationship between play (the ludic element), sports (the agnostic element that involves a contest/test) and games, a well-documented and complex triad.[22] The following quote represents the basic tenets of his work:

> We may well call play a "totality" in the modern sense of the word … In all its higher forms [play] at any rate belongs to the sphere of festival and ritual—the sacred sphere … The Platonic identification of play and holiness does not defile the latter by calling it play, rather it exalts the concept of play to the highest regions of the spirit … In play we move below the level of the serious, as the child does; but we can also move above it—in the realm of the beautiful and sacred.[23]

Clearly, for Huizinga (1950), play is imbued with a sacred or spiritual dimension. While his theory of play courts some theological themes, it was Rahner (1972), a Jesuit catholic theologian, who added a strong theological foundation to the concept of play, by locating God the Creator as the 'ultimate player'. A series of philosophical and theological studies of play followed, all of which in some way are indebted to the protestant liberal theologian Tillich (1886-1965), who pioneered theological analysis of culture in the twentieth century (Johnston, 1983; Grimshaw, 2012). These scholars variously commented on the role of play and festivity (Cox, 1969; Pieper, 1965; see also, Eichberg, 2009a) in understanding God's creation and mission, the evolution of civilization, human interactions and the relationship between, and significance of, play, games and sports (e.g., Johnston, 1983: Moltmann, 1972; Söll,1972[24]; Miller, 1971, 1969; Callois, 1958) and how Christian athletes may view playful

sport as a form of worship; an expression of devotion and love toward God (Neale, 1969). Collectively, these authors, alongside more recent chapters and articles (e.g., Erdozain, 2012a; Harvey, 2012; Sing, 2011; Kelly, 2011; Kretchmar, 2011; Hoffman, 2010a: 273-280; Twietmeyer, 2009; Preece, 2009; Hamilton, 2008a; Thoennes, 2008; Feeney, 2006, 1995; Koch, 2003; Kliever, 2001; Heintzman, Van Andel and Visker, 1994/2006[25]), are in general agreement that play can be characterized by a sense of freedom and autonomy, a non-utilitarian ethic, a celebratory and spontaneous spirit, creativity, joy, intrinsic enjoyment (the autotelic), a transcendence of ego-boundaries and a feeling of psychic (and spiritual) holistic integration. Arguably, it is Johnston's book, *The Christian at Play* (1983), which provides one of the most comprehensive overviews of 'Christians at play'.[26]

Charting the theological reflection of play from Augustine (354-430*c*.) and other Church fathers through to the modern era, Johnston (1983) provides a biblical model of play (i.e., Hebraic, Greek and Protestant),[27] an exploration of leisure, work, play and sport and the differing theological options that have emerged (e.g., Moltmann, Berger and C.S. Lewis[28]). Following others, he warns against the risk of framing a 'theology of play' as another 'pop theology' (e.g., the death of God and human potential movements), by humanizing or deifying play and thus mistakenly adopting current opinion and identifying it with the Christian religion *per se*. On the whole, Johnston is optimistic about 'Christians at play' but acknowledges the Church's suspicious (e.g., Augustine and Puritans) and ambivalent attitude toward play, pleasure and sport.[29] He also suggests that protestant '… evangelical Christians are so prone to instrumentalize everything' (ix), including play, that modern commercialised sport has lost its playfulness, and thus its sacred roots.

This claim has been at the centre of scholarly debate on this topic since the late 1960s, especially in America, and leading Catholic voices, such as Novak (1967/1994), point to the protestant work-ethic (rooted in individualistic Calvinistic doctrine) and Marxist ideology as the major forces that have transformed sport into a soul-less utilitarian endeavour. Huizinga (1950:199) concurs, stating that '… we have an activity nominally known as play but raised to such a pitch of technical organisation and scientific thoroughness that the real play-spirit is threatened with extinction'. Following a number of devastating Marxist critiques of the modern sporting institution (Rigauer, 1981; Brohm, 1971), which have suggested that 'sacred play moments' in sports have been lost through the pervasive forces of industrial capitalism (Gruneau, 1980),[30] a number of scholars in support of Huizinga (Overman, 2011, 1997; Lasch, 1980; Guttman, 1978/2004), have argued that 'sport has become work' (an individual calling in Calvinist doctrine) for many, characterized by rationality, quantification, bureaucracy, commercialism, greed and a quest for personal glory. The ethical sporting quandaries that arise from this institutional and instrumental approach to sport are many and varied and represent a topic to which we will turn in due course. Another reason why sport may be perceived to have lost its playfulness, remembering that a key characteristic of play is anthropological holism (i.e., mind, body and spirit), is the historical baggage of Platonic-Cartesian dualism in western theology and the theory and practice of physical education (i.e., the mind-body split).

Addressing themes of embodiment and theological dichotomies (an insufficient epistemology that underplays the complexity of things) in the modern discourse on sports, a number of scholars have presented frameworks for thinking about sport rooted in holistic Judea-Christian and Pauline theology (Barrajón, 2012; White, 2012b; Kretchmar, 2011; Scarpa and Carraro, 2011; Hochstetler, Hopsicker and Kretchmar, 2008; Twietmeyer, 2009, 2008;

Watson, 2007a; also see, Thaden, 2003). The Thomist scholar, Pieper (1965, 1948/1998) has been arguably the most important thinker from the Catholic community with regards to orthodox theological understandings of leisure, play, work and recreation. Drawing mainly on Aquinas (1225-1274*c*.) and thus Aristotle, Pieper extols the worth and necessity of leisure and play and attacks the 'cult of work' that has embroiled industrialised western civilization, by presenting a holistic theological anthropology that views the body as inherently good and spiritual. Pieper's thesis has significantly influenced protestant accounts of sport and play, as well as recent analyses of play (and related psychological concepts, such as 'flow'[31]) by Catholic sports scholars (Kelly, 2011; Sing, 2011, 2004) that have helped to counter the epistemological and theological error of dualism in western theology and the study and understanding of sport. The Greek dualistic philosophy of Plato, as used especially in the writings of church father Origen (182-251*c*.), have been extremely influential in denigrating the worth/sacredness of the body and thus sport and physical education (in comparison to academics and other cultural forms) in the last two millennia (Wilson, 1989). This trend has also permeated the predominantly secular based sports studies disciplines, such as sport psychology, which we also discuss after providing a historical backdrop.

Beginning with the Church fathers and practices of desert monasticism in the early centuries of Christendom, spiritual writers from across the traditions have advocated the sacrament of the 'present movement', in which a person can experience God bodily, a sense of wholeness, centeredness and peace (Williams, 2003; Quoist, 1965; Merton, 1948).[32] This 'present' disposition (based on the presence of the Holy Spirit) allows for negative experience and feelings from the past, and fears of the future, to be largely surrendered to God. Interestingly then, four decades of sport psychology research has consistently demonstrated that heightened levels of competitive-anxiety, largely due to personality traits, external influences

(e.g., presence of significant others), past poor-performance and fear of failure (the opposite disposition to flow, see Sager, Lavallee and Spray, 2009), most often results in maladaptive stress, a reduced sense of overall well-being and a resultant decrements in performance (Weinberg and Gould, 2011c). Indeed, longitudinal empirical studies have shown that when athletes attain 'flow states', being able to stay in the present (as with play), is a key aspect of this experience (Jackson and Csikszentmihalyi, 1999). For example, the golfer Tiger Woods comments that 'I get so entrenched in the moment … that … there are many shots or many putts I don't remember hitting. The more intense the situation gets that calmer I feel and the more things slow down. It's a weird sensation' (Shedloski, 2011: 62). This raises two key questions: (i) are there any ontological and epistemological similarities in the experiences of religious devotees and sports performers (?) and (ii) is there a possibility that Christians may observe improvements in sports performance due to the peace and centeredness they may experience?

The tendency to dichotomize subjective, playful sporting experience and sport psychology consultancy work has been critiqued by humanistic sport psychologists (e.g., Ravizza, 2002, 1984) and popular sports theorists (e.g., Cooper, 1998; Murphy and White, 1995). Cooper and Murphy and White, have subsequently gone on to make a series of claims that athletes' reports of 'being-in-the-zone', 'in the present moment', and/or 'in flow', are in some way spiritual, religious, sublime (Kant and Burke), mystical or numinous (Otto) ecstatic experiences, that parallel those of Moses, St. Paul or the medieval mystics, such as St. John of the Cross and St. Theresa of Avila. Philosophically eclectic work surrounding the so-called 'Runner's High' (i.e., euphoric sensations experienced while long-distance running), has been central to this genre of scholarship (e.g., Sands, 2010; Sands and Sands, 2009; Battista, 2004; Jones, 2004; Joslin, 2003) and arguably stems from Sheehan's seminal text, *Running and*

Being (1978), which is oft-cited in sport-religion studies that explore religious experience and flow-states.

Although some psychologists (Csikszentmihalyi, 1988) and catholic scholars (Hastings, 2004; Kelly, 2011) have noted conceptual, if not ontological and epistemological, parallels between 'flow' experiences and the meditative and contemplative practices of catholic communities (e.g., Jesuit and Ignation), Christian scholars have critiqued this eclectic body of work for its etymological and philosophical naivety, while championing the good of these sporting experiences in themselves (Watson, 2007b; Higgs and Braswell, 2004; Hoffman, 1992,b,c; Higgs, 1983). In particular, these writers, ask whether so-called spiritual experiences[33] and the use and interpretation of sporting metaphors, such as 'sporting spirit', in traditional and alternative/extreme[34] sports (see O'Gorman, 2010a; Watson, 2007b), lead the athlete to a deeper commitment to God, purification from vices and the development of humility, the benchmark of Christian mysticism down the centuries? In this vein, is it then theologically plausible to consider that the Christian belief of an athlete may lead to enhanced performance, and /or winning?

Based on data from interviews with professional athletes who have made a commitment to the Christian faith during their career (Hubbard, 1998),[35] it could be argued that the process of Christian salvation and the life-long surrendering of the heart to God (alongside technical physical practice and fitness conditioning), which according to Christian teaching leads to inner peace and a sense of identity rooted in God the father (Romans 8: 1-18), may inadvertently lead an athlete to improved performance in competition. This said, it is vital to point out that while the quest for excellence in any human endeavour is a very positive goal,

success, enhanced performance and winning in sport, is certainly not the central message of the Christian gospel (Brock, 2012; Watson, 2012,a,b, 2011b).

Considering the wealth of research on play and related concepts and the fact that it has been argued that moderns in a rationalized scientific age have lost their playful 'sense of wonder' (Dubay, 1999) and the ability to 'see contemplatively' beyond the material world (Rolheiser, 2001), further research on play in organized sport is vital. In fact, Hoffman (2010a) has argued, in support of many others, that the recovery of the play ethic in modern sport is essential for its long-term health and re-creation. Questions for future research include: in light of the historical suspicion and ambivalence of the Church, with regard to play, how can playful activities such as sport, dance, music[36] and the arts (see Begbie, 2000) be further integrated into ecclesiological praxis? Building on theological works of joy in sports (Altrogge, 2008; Null, 2004) and interdisciplinary analyses of humour in sporting contexts (Eichberg, 2009a,b; Walford, 2009; Levine, 1967), what are the links between humour, laughter and play in sporting locales (see Eldredge, 2011; Martin, 2011; Capps, 2006; Berger, 1997; Heddendorf, 1994/2006; Kuschel, 1994)? As the majority of previous research has largely assumed that play is a uniform concept, how does the experience of different depths of play ('deep/profound' and 'shallow/diversionary', see Ackerman, 1997) impact the sportsperson? How can theologies and philosophies of play help to counteract the commercialised and scientized world of sport? Does the theological basis of religious disability communities, such as *L'Arche*[37] (i.e., cooperation, celebration, festivity, humour, forgiveness, humility and vulnerability), whose activities including sports and leisure (see O'Keefe, 1994/2006), hold a prophetic and corrective message for the commercialised sports institution (see Watson, 2012a,b; Watson and Parker, 2012b)? What is the role of neuro-

theological research in holistically understanding playful moments of transcendence during sports participation (see Ward, 2012; Dietrich, 2003)?

Play experiences permeate our culture, with Berger (1970) famously calling these moments 'signals of transcendence' in the human condition. Examining how such moments have contributed to the development of muscular Christianity over the last 150 years is our next task.

Muscular Christianity and Sports Ministry

> …. first, convert the athletes, who are among the most visible individuals in our society, then, use these stars for what is generally known in the business as 'outreach', an up-to date rendering of the old-fashioned phrase 'missionary work'.
>
> Frank Deford (1976, b: 66)

Due to the historical significance of the Anglo-American (and largely protestant)[38] movement of Victorian muscular Christianity (1850-) on modern sport, physical education and the evolution of modern 'sport ministry' (i.e., neo-muscular Christian groups), there are numerous books and scholarly articles on this subject.[39] In short, the ideology of Victorian muscular Christianity proffers the notion that sport and physical education has the potential to build manly and virtuous character, which is characterised by '… fair play, respect (both for oneself and others), strength (physical and emotional), perseverance, deference, subordination, obedience, discipline, loyalty, cooperation, self-control, self-sacrifice [and], endurance' (Collins and Parker, 2009: 194). This philosophy materialised during an age when the colonial, military and industrial aspirations of the British Empire were high on the agenda of the ruling classes, and thus sports in Victorian public schools were a vehicle to create

leaders, that is, 'good Christian gentlemen' (Watson, Weir and Friend, 2005; Mangan, 1981/2000). Heavily influenced by the incarnational theology of F.D. Maurice, and champions of the Christian Socialist movement (one aspect of the 'social gospel' rhetoric), such as, J.M. Ludlow (1821-1911), it was Charles Kingsley (1819-1875) and Thomas Hughes (1822-1896) who developed and applied the doctrine of muscular Christianity, which also quickly gained acceptance in America, in particular though the *Young Men's Christian Association* (YMCA) and the ministry of D.L. Moody (Bloomfield, 1994; Norman, 1987). Over the last 150 years but especially since protestant evangelicals began to recognise sport as a cultural vehicle to proselytise in the 1950s (Watson, 2007a), muscular Christianity (or more accurately, aspects of this movement) has morphed into a largely evangelical endeavour, under the banner of 'sports ministry'.

For scholars wishing to study this influential movement, the key scholarly texts that focus mainly on the British context and which we would argue are indebted to Mangan's (1981/2000) seminal work, are Erdozain (2010), Hall (1994), Vance (1985), Haley (1978) and McLeod, (forthcoming) with socio-historical treatments of Victorian sport being important complementary resources (Huggins, 2004; Birley, 1993; Dunning and Sheard, 1979/2005). The notable academic analyses of muscular Christianity in an American context, are Putney (2001a, largely a history) and Ladd and Mathisen (1999), the latter being especially insightful with regards to modern-day sports ministry organisations and the use/misuse of Pauline athletic metaphors by modern 'muscular Christians'. Along similar lines, Hoffman (2010a) and Krattenmaker's (2010) texts, while noting the historical development of muscular Christianity, document and critique the approach of modern American neo-muscular Christian sports ministry organisations, such as the *Fellowship of Christian Athletes* (FCA) and the practice of 'sports chaplaincy' (see appendix 1)[40]. There are

also a handful of scholars from other Christian traditions and world religions who have examined 'muscular Catholicism' (Chandler, 2002; McDevitt, 1997), 'muscular Judaism '(Meyer, 2009; Mendelsohn, 2009; Pressner, 2007; Gurock, 2005; Eisen, 1998; Hughes, 1996), 'muscular Islam' (Baker, 2007b; Smith 2002), 'muscular Hinduism' (Alter, 2004), 'muscular Mormonism' (Kimball, 2008) and 'muscular Quakerism' (Freeman, 2010). These resources are helpful when seeking to more fully understand the evolution of muscular Christianity in a culturally and religiously pluralistic world.

Conceptually, Ladd and Mathisen's (1999) 'four models' of muscular Christianity are helpful in reviewing how this movement has evolved in Britain[41] and America in the last 150 years. These are: (i) the classical model, based primarily on the ideology and social praxis of Kingsley and Hughes that had significant impact on the development of the English public school system in the late nineteenth century (e.g., Eton, Uppingham, Marlborough, Harrow and Rugby schools); (ii) the evangelical model, which was championed by C.T. Studd (1860-1931) and D.L. Moody (1837-1899) in the early years and then athletes, such as Eric Liddell (1902-1945), whose athletic and religious accomplishments were depicted in the l981 film, *Chariots of Fire* (1981: see Cashmore, 2008; Preece, 2009); (iii) the *Young Men's Christian Association* (YMCA)[42] model that was birthed in 1844 in London, England, and 1851 in Boston, America, and whose ideas were supported by all those who saw the importance of care for the poor and advancement of the gospel through masculine and moral young men (e.g., Garnham, 2001; Binfield, 1973), and (iv) the Olympic model, whose principle advocate was the founder of the modern Olympic Games (1896-), the French aristocrat and philanthropist, Baron Pierre de Coubertin (1863-1937), who read *the* muscular Christian novel, *Tom Brown's Schooldays* (Hughes, 1857) and visited Rugby school in 1883. Both

these events having a significant role in forming his ideology that birthed the modern Olympic games (1896-).[43]

There are, of course, scores of book chapters and articles that address many of the sub-topics within Ladd and Mathisen's (1999) four-point model. Some include the historical roots of muscular Christianity in the Old Testament and Medieval Europe that explored, for example, notions of chivalry and knighthood in the middle-ages and war and dance in the Jewish faith (Higgs and Braswell, 2004; Carter, 1984a,b; Thomas, 1976; Eisen, 1975; Ballou, 1973); the relationships between the Puritan view of sport and muscular Christianity (e.g., Overman, 2011; Ryken, 2006, 1987, 1986; Swanson, 1978); how the secularisation of western society impacted sports and leisure in Victorian England and conversely, how the modern-day obsession with sport may contribute to the secularization of churches by diverting their mission focus (Erdozain, 2010; Collins and Parker, 2009); the social and ethical issues that are implicit within the muscular Christian movement (Hoffman, 2010a, 1986; Bradley, 2007;Watson, 2007a; Grace, 2000; Spencer, 2000; Higgs, 1983; McIntosh, 1979b); the role of muscular Christianity in the evolution of the Modern Olympic games (Kruger, 1993; Lucas, 1976, 1975); muscular Christian motifs in *Tom Brown's School Days* and classic children's literature that pre-date the birth of the movement in the 1850s (Redmond, 1978; Winn, 1960), and how British Colonialism has spread the muscular Christian message and thus traditional British sports (e.g., Macaloon, 2009; Alter, 2004). Likewise, scholarship surrounding 'Sunday sport' (i.e., sport on the Sabbath) has been quite extensive.

Over the last century Church attendance has sharply declined in the western world, especially in the UK (see Brierley, 2006; Gill, 2003). This has led Deford (1976d: 92) to observe that

'…the churches have ceded Sunday to sports…Sport owns Sunday now, and religion is content to lease a few minutes before big games'. This scenario has been briefly examined by sports historians (e.g., Brailsford, 1991; Holt, 1990) and others who address a range of issues surrounding the doctrine of Sabbatarianism (e.g., Waller, 2009; Helman, 2008; Heintzman, 2006; Price, 2001b). To varying degrees, most of these authors frame their analyses around the well-known story of Scottish athlete, Eric Liddell, whose decision not to compete on a Sunday (Exodus, 20:8) in a qualifying heat of the 100 meters at the 1924 Paris Olympics, was depicted in the film, *Chariots of Fire* (see Cashmore, 2008; Preece, 2009; Keddie, 2007; Watson, 2007a). The former triple-jump Olympic champion and world record holder, Jonathan Edwards was until recently (when he renounced his Christian faith),[44] often viewed as a modern-day 'muscular Christian' comparable to Liddell (Folley, 2001). Such comparisons were principally based on Edward's decision not to compete in the British athletic trials for the 1988 Seoul Olympics, as they also took place on a Sunday. In time, however, Edwards had a change of heart and started to compete on Sundays, after becoming aware of new-covenant bible verse (Romans 14: 15) that states that 'one man considers one day more sacred than the other; another man considers everyday alike' (Folley, 2001). In more recent times, both Euan Murray (a Scottish rugby international) and Dan Walker (a BBC sports presenter), have followed in the footsteps of Liddell. Murray refuses to play rugby on a Sunday and when signing autographs includes a bible verse (Kessel, 2010). Likewise, in order not to compromise his Sabbatarian beliefs, Walker (2009) refuses to work for the BBC on the Sabbath.

Other niche areas of research on muscular Christianity include: Catholic reflections on the movement[45] (Costantini and Lixey, 2011; Vost, 2011[46]; McGrath, 2008; Chandler, 2002; McDevitt, 1997) which include empirical research from *The Mirenda Centre for Sport,*

Spirituality and Character Development (Hastings et al, 2006; Hastings and DelleMonache, 2007); the links between revivalism and rugby in Edwardian Wales (Morgan, 2005); critiques identifying an emphasis of the physical over the moral in the ideology and practice of muscular Christianity (Mangan and Walvin, 1987); examination of gender construction in Victorian educational ideology (Neddham, 2004); the neglect and celebration of, 'muscular women' (Deardorff and Deardorff, 2008; Millikan, 2006; Stebner and Trothen, 2002; Putney, 2001b; Borish, 1987; Bederman, 1989; Vertinsky, 1987; Chen and Zhao, 2001); the role of muscular Christianity in the emergence of 'men's movements' such as the *Promise Keepers* (1990-) in America in the 1990's (Harper, 2012; Randels and Beal, 2002; Balmer, 2000; Hawkins, 2000; Beal, 1997; Web-Mitchell, 1997); the enmeshed imperialistic and political agendas of militarism, social Darwinism and muscular Christianity (Mangan, 2011; Pope, 2010); the historical and social process that at least partially wed soccer to Christian masculine ideals (Mangan and Hickey, 2008; Kwauk, 2007; Lupson, 2006); and the influence of the 'social gospel' movement and leisure revolution that led to the notion of 'rational recreation' (Cavallo, 1981; Cunningham, 1980), a class-based and political '… movement designed to counter moral slippage, mass delinquency and mob culture' (Collins and Parker, 2009: 196). The 'games playing' ethos inculcated by the muscular Christian message in English public schools and implicit in 'rational recreation', was not, Mangan (1982: 33) observes, the '… exclusive prerogative of didactic muscular Christians … Hedonists, opportunists, pragmatists and moralists … embraced the cult of games … in late Victorian England'.

For sure, political leaders through the twentieth century have continued to advance the long-held (and controversial) muscular Christian idea that 'sport builds character' (Coakley, 2011). A wide range of social and religious movements have also emerged during the last 150 years,

which have advocated physical endeavours, such as sport and physical training (later to be called physical education) as a vehicle to contribute to the positive development of civil and moral character (sometimes with militaristic undertones). Social historian Freeman (2010), suggests that these include the utilisation of sports in the *Sunday School* movement in the 1880s (see McLeod, 2007),[47] the *Scouts*, founded by Sir Baden-Powell (1857-1941) in 1907, the *Boys Brigade* (1883-) and the *Outward Bound* movement (1941-), the latter of which was instigated by the German educationalist, Kurt Hahn (1886-1974). Freeman goes on to note that during the 1960s there was a shift away from a focus on 'character training' and education for leadership (a corporate vision) to an individual quest for 'personal growth' and 'self-discovery'.

Arguably, this reflects the secularisation of western culture and the individualism and promulgation of theories of 'self-actualisation' from humanistic psychology and sport psychology (e.g., Bellah, 2007; Maslow, 1968; Ravizza, 1984). Indeed, Aitken (1989: 401) in support of sport sociologists who have evaluated the prevalence and validity of the use of prayer, superstitions and rituals in sports (e.g., Coakley, 2007), argues that "Born-Again Sport," like fundamentalist Christianity, holds to a very traditionalist view of American life where winning is a virtue … [which] … has contributed to the ongoing process of secularization by reducing religion to magic'. Possibly the most controversial and widely-documented example of this kind of scenario is when athletes are seen (or heard) to pray for 'God to be on their team', this in an attempt to influence the outcome of the game, and in the ultimate interests of winning (see Hoffman, 2011; Price, 2009; Kreider, 2003). Over the last four decades, Hoffman (1986: 18) has been the most vociferous critic of this kind of utilitarian approach to sport:

> Christian athletes confront an inevitable contradiction. Sport which celebrates the myth of success is harnessed to a theology that often stresses the importance of losing. Sport which symbolizes a morality of self-reliance and teaches the just rewards of hard-work is used to propagate a theology dominated by the radicalism of grace (the first shall be last and the last shall be first). Sport, a microcosm of meritocracy, is used to celebrate religion that says that all are unworthy and undeserving.

While championing the many positives of sports, this ethic, Watson (2011b, 2007b) argues, is diametrically opposed to the Christian injunction to 'die to oneself' and thus is more analogous to the atheistic existentialism of philosophers such as Sartre, Camus or Nietzsche. Echoing such thoughts, Erdozain (2010: 105),[48] proposes that the foundational muscular Christian doctrine of manliness (and competitiveness) that frequently seems to indoctrinate humanistic virtues, is '… the opposite to the Pauline concept of divine strength being made ''perfect in weakness': the [competitive sport] model is divine approval for human strength, albeit strength of will rather than mere physicality'. Historically, this stems from what Overman (2011: 61) calls the 'great protestant delusion', that is, that human existence is principally directed and shaped by the force of human will, a point of critique for most Catholic scholars reflecting on protestant models of sport (e.g., Novak, 1967/1994). Observations such as this have sparked a growing genre of scholarship that has vigorously questioned the 'theologies of competition' that have emerged within modern sports ministries.

At the heart of this literature is the proposal that modern-day advocates of muscular Christian ideals often uncritically adopt tenets of contemporary sporting culture that have little, if any, affinity with the gospel of Christ (e.g., Brock, 2012; Hoffman, 2010a; Krattenmaker, 2010; Erdozain, 2010; Ladd and Mathisen, 1999; Mathisen, 1994/2006, 1998, 1990; Aitken, 1989). Sociologists of religion, Ladd and Mathisen (1999,) have conceptualised the broader ideology that has developed within the short history of modern sports ministry (1950s-), as a 'folk theology' comprising five facets: (i) Pragmatic utility (ii) Meritocratic democracy (iii) Competitive virtue (iv) Heroic models, and (v) Therapeutic self-control. Perhaps the most oft-cited aspect of this 'folk theology' is 'pragmatic utility', that is, sports usefulness as a means to attract and convert people.[49] Notwithstanding the criticisms surrounding modern sports ministry, there are a number of scholars (and notably the majority of Catholic Popes of the 20th century, see Koch, 2012), who also believe in the goodness and worth of the endeavours of sports ministries (e.g., Pfitzner, 2012; White, 2012a; Watson, 2007a; Liberia Editrice Vaticana, 2006).

Reflecting on this, we provoke scholars to consider that sports ministry organisations, particularly in America, might just be an intimation, albeit an imperfect one, of the 'local tradition' or 'light' in the microcosm of modern sport. This thesis stems from our reading of the Old Testament theologian, Brueggeman (2010: 18), who, in resonating with other prophetic voices such as Jim Wallis, William Stringfellow (1973, 2004) and Jacques Ellul, argues that the hegemonic 'American Empire' is a modern-day Babylon that is '… living in a cocoon of self-justification' and unconscious denial, as was the case for previous empires, for example, Roman, Persian and British. The American Church, the faithful body of believers, is the 'local tradition' for Brueggman, as were the exiled Jews in Babylon before the intervention of Cyrus, and thus should actively resist the imperialistic self-indulgent greed,

pride, power and arrogance of the empire (as did the prophets). Do sports ministry organisations, in some small way, fulfil this role of the 'local tradition' in what Watson and White (2007) have called the modern sporting Babel? If it is true, as Hoffman (2010a) has consistently claimed, that modern sports ministry groups uncritically embrace the cultural norms of this sporting Babel, then Brueggman has a stark warning, but one which also provides a glimmer of hope for our thesis:

> The local tradition, which stands in deep tension with the empire, knows the denial cannot finally cover over the reality … [of] anxiety … The congregation of the local tradition, having inhaled so much imperial air, is itself slow and reluctant to realise what has been entrusted to it … Such a congregation is tempted to collude with and accommodate itself to the loud, insistent practices of the empire. At best, however, the congregation, funded by the local tradition, knows better … it tells an alternative and opposing story to that of the empire centred on the covenant with YHWH.[50]

So it seems that, as Brueggeman (2010) goes onto explain, scholars wanting to pursue this line of reasoning must do so with care so as not to dichotomize (or demonize) a complex and dynamic relationship between empire and local tradition, as any organisation or institution can occupy, to varying degrees both roles simultaneously. Future scholarship, could however examine how this dynamic operates within sport ministry locales and how models of 'overt' (e.g., proselytizing)[51] and 'covert' (incarnational modelling through service to others) ministry could both be affectively embraced (see Johnson, 2006). Beyond institutional analyses of the sport-faith dyad, there are a whole range of more specific research questions

and topics that Watson (2007a) has urged scholars and practitioners from across the traditions of Christendom to collaborate on.

Perhaps initially, one of the most important tasks is to undertake a comprehensive mapping of sports ministry publications, provision and practice across different countries and Christian traditions (e.g., UK and America /catholic and protestant). In addition to the largely critical works on muscular Christianity and the resources[52] of sports ministry organisations (e.g., White *et al*., 2008; Neal, 1981, 1972[53]), to-date the key sources from a protestant perspective are Mason (2011, 2003), Null (2008b, 2004), White and White (2006), Garner (2003), Connor (2003), McCowan and Gin (2003), Shields (2002), Voss (1997) and Yessick (1996), and from a catholic standpoint, White (2012a), Liberia Editrice Vaticana (2006) and Hastings et al., (2006). Beyond use in sports ministry praxis, some of these resources are used on a range of postgraduate courses in America and more recently in the UK at the University of Gloucestershire (Collins and Parker, 2009), which have a specific focus on sports ministry and/or chaplaincy. The systematic mapping of such educational courses and publications would provide an objective sociological and theological foundation, and rationale, for further research and course development in all levels of tertiary education. The results of such a project would also pave the way for greater ecumenical and inter-cultural dialogue through sport-faith organisations that Catholic scholars have recently identified as an important initiative (Müller, 2011; Kammogne, 2011) and which, we argue, could provide a forum via which to broach more divisive ecclesiological matters.

Considering that *Sport Alpha* (2012-)[1] has recently been launched at Holy Trinity Brompton Church, London, UK, scholars should also investigate how the medium of sport can be used as a means of outreach and evangelism within Church structures, as the majority of sports ministries are currently Para-church organisations (see Daniels and Weir, 2008; Carpenter, 2001). In addition to 'sports ministry groups', a number of 'individual sport evangelists', such as the extradited Zimbabwean international cricketer, Henry Olonga, have recently emerged and have used their sporting success/fame as a means by which to combat human-rights abuses and to share their faith (see Batts, 2010; Olonga, 2010).[54] Research investigating the experiences and effectiveness of lone 'modern-day muscular Christians', such as Olonga and others (Gibbons, Dixon and Braye, 2008),[55] would be valuable, in terms of comparing and contrasting these biographies with previous Christian sports figures, such as Eric Liddell.

Conceptualisations of Christian masculinity within sporting contexts, is also a niche area which has received little attention to-date. While not neglecting the wealth of research on masculine identities in modern sport (e.g., Wellard, 2009; Messner, Mckay and Sabo, 2000), scholars looking for a holistic understanding of this topic should access both protestant and catholic writings (e.g., Aune, 2010; Rohr, 2005, 2004a,b; Eldredge, 2001; Putney, 2001a; Claussen, 2000; Ward, 1999)[56] and the work of Deardorff and Deardorff (2008), who have drawn on some of this literature in their theological analysis of both masculine and feminine templates in sports settings. Similarly, the challenges that Christian sportswomen face in negotiating their femininity in male-dominated sports, is a topic with very little reflection, except that of Deardorff and Deardorff and a small handful of scholarly essays from catholic (Sydnor, 2009, 2006a,b, 2005) and protestant thinkers (Millikan, 2006; Stebner and Trothen, 2002; Chen and Zhao, 2001; Putney, 2001b; Bederman, 1989; Borish, 1987; Vertinsky, 1987;

[1]For Sport Alpha website: http://uk-england.alpha.org/alpha/sports-alpha

Carmody, 1986). The scope for further research is therefore, significant and we would argue crucial if the Church and sports ministry organisations are to more fully engage with, and provide instruction and guidance for, Christian women who are passionate about sport.

Another closely related topic is that of the exegesis and use of Pauline athletic metaphors (e.g., 1 Corinthians 9: 24-27) and in particular, the *agon* motif, in the literature and praxis of sports ministry organisations; what Mangan (1982) terms, 'agnostic muscularity'. In addition to Catholic analyses on this topic (e.g., White, 2012a; Costantini and Lixey, 2011; Feeney, 2006, 1995; Koch, 2005b, 2003), it is the work of Lutheran theologian, Pfitzner (2012, 2009, 1981, 1967), that encompasses historical, cultural, philosophical and theological dimensions of the study of such metaphors, which scholars argue is the most authoritative resource (Ladd and Mathisen, 1999; Hoffman, 2010a; Watson, 2007a). This area of research comprises three broad themes: (i) exegetical and hermeneutical issues surrounding the praxis of Pauline athletic metaphors in preaching and sports ministry contexts (ii) historical, cultural and archaeological evidence that situates and contextualises the use of Paul's athletic metaphors and related concepts, such as asceticism, endurance, suffering, self-sacrifice, martyrdom and death, victory, heroism, contest and struggle towards the fulfilment of a spiritual (eschatological) or earthly goal (victory in sport), all aspects of modern sports, and (iii) the use of athletic metaphors to construct a 'theology of sport' and/or a 'theology of sports competition' based on the controversial premise that 'sport builds character' and is a vehicle for evangelistic endeavours[57].

Following this theme, Kidd (2010: 163) has recently suggested that the myriad of 'sport-peace' enterprises that have emerged over the last decade, whose aim it is to combat ethical

and social issues through the vehicle of sport are a '… striking reassertion of Thomas Hughes' nineteenth-century ideals of sport as a pedagogy of beneficial change'. Our next task then, is to review the literature that has documented and analysed the ethical issues surrounding modern-day sports.

Theological Ethics in Sport (with psychological considerations)

> Reducing sporting performances to matters of science, money, power or fame ultimately destroys their internal significance, and becomes a kind of moral defeatism.
>
> Damian Grace (2000:12)

> Professional athletes have become the naughty vicars of the 21st century, required to set a moral example for which they have no inclination and little aptitude…A moral burden…is placed on the back of every professional athlete.
>
> Simon Barnes (2011: 93)

In 1986 Hoffman, published an article in the periodical *Christianity Today* entitled, *The Sanctification of Sport: Can the Mind of Christ Co-exist with the Killer Instinct*? In many ways this question provides a basic start point for theological ethicists examining the sports world that has, since Victorian times been upheld up as a 'moral laboratory'. Not forgetting the many positive values that can be experienced in sport, such as teamwork, altruism, strength, self-control, justice, loyalty, wisdom, self-sacrifice, equality, courage, generosity, joy, honesty, tenacity and hard work, solidarity, peace, love (*Philia*, friendship love) and community spirit (McNamee, 2011, 2008; White, 2012a, 2008; Scarpa and Carraro, 2011;

Corlett, 1996), which Pope John Paul II recognised as the 'the most authentic dimension of sport'[58], the multi-billion-dollar global institute of professional and American College sport (see Overman, 2011) has been fraught with ethical and moral issues for over a century. This led historian and social commentator, Lasch (1980), to title his oft-cited chapter *The Degradation of Sport,*[59] which he argues partially stems from the loss of the sacred dimension in the modern sporting milieu.

Beside the secularization of western culture (Taylor, 2007; Ratzinger, 2005) and consequently the microcosm of sport (Yamane, Mellies and Blake, 2010; Guttman, 1978/2004), the scientization, commodification and professionalization of sport since the 1960s has largely been driven by the allied growth of televised sport and mass sponsorship (Whannel, 1986). This shift has been a major determinant in the decline of ethical values in the sporting realm (Beamish and Ritchie, 2006; Hoberman, 1992). Recognising that the application of science to sport (i.e., biomechanics, physiology and psychology) is not a negative development in itself, Twietmeyer (2008: 461), highlights that these historical changes may have inadvertently led to a more utilitarian approach to sport: 'science (a necessary, although not sufficient, good in Kinesiology) ends up overwhelming the field. Consequently the study of human movement is unalterably crippled'. Any quest for deeper spiritual meaning, or simply a spirit of freedom and playfulness in sporting contexts, is then often lost in a quest for external gains, such as winning for personal glory and status and /or financial greed.

The moral and ethical issues that have materialized from this instrumental approach to sport are innumerable and have been at least partially driven by what Walsh and Giulianotti (2007)

call the ‘Sporting Mammon’ that rapidly emerged as sport was professionalized and became big-business. Key areas of research include: physical and verbal abuse of opponents (and even teammates), fan violence, including sectarianism (e.g., Lawrence, 2011; Sugden and Bairner, 1993), intimidation, blatant disregard for the spirit of the rules, mistaking legality for ethicality, sexual abuse of athletes by coaches, praying to win (Kreider, 2003), trash talk, cheating, playing with pain and injuries (Howe, 2004; Nixon, 1992), financial greed and corruption, alienation in individual and international relations (e.g., political boycotting of the Olympics and the threat of global terrorism),[60] invasive non-corrective surgery for athletic performance enhancement (Hamilton, 2006) , drug-doping, abuse of officials, genetic-enhancement technologies, abusive child and youth elite development academies (e.g., in former eastern-bloc countries and China, see Hong, 2006), overtraining and abuse of one’s body and the potential deleterious effects of excessive expectations and pressure from parents, coaches and even nations (see McNamee, 2010; Miah, 2010, 2004; Morgan, 2007; Simon, 2004; Lumpkin, Stoll and Beller, 2002; McNamee and Parry, 1998; McIntosh, 1979a)[61]. This burgeoning sports ethics literature identifies many moral problems within professional sport and in turn has spawned a number of practical initiatives, both in America and across continental Europe. Examples include, the *American Sport Education Program* (1981-), the *Centre for ETHICS* (1993-)[62], the *Character Counts* project (Josephson Institute, Centre for Youth Ethics, 1987-), the *Positive Coaching Alliance* (1998-) and the *Vatican Church Sport* office (2004-), all of which promote ethical practice (and scholarship) in sport through educational programmes and workshops.

Within the discipline of sport philosophy, this corpus of ethical studies and concomitant initiatives far outweigh contributions from other philosophical sub-disciplines, such as epistemology, aesthetics and metaphysics (e.g., McNamee, 2010; Morgan, 2007; Simon,

2004). For the Christian theologian, it is the divorce of ethics from metaphysics that presents a serious epistemological error (see Kretchmar, 1983), which is rooted in the fact that for the first 20 years of the discipline the bulk of ethical reflection in sport was underpinned by secular analytical philosophy (McNamee, 2010, 2007a). Schools of thought, such as pragmatism (especially Jamesian) and phenomenology that appear more compatible with spiritual concepts, have slowly begun to emerge in the discipline of the philosophy of sport, which is a promising sign. Notwithstanding all of this, Watson (2011a: 10), recently asked, 'has the world of sport, especially big-business professional sport, actually changed significantly', following 40 years of philosophical reflection and programming?

Critiquing the values of modern sport, utilising Augustinian ethics, philosopher Hamilton (2011), suggests not and argues that we need to explore the metaphysical roots of the problems in sport, rather than seeking piecemeal solutions. Kretchmar (1998), in agreement, has argued that when studying sport, '… to do ethics *in vacuo*, without some sort of metaphysical basis, is a questionable endeavour'[63]. It is encouraging then that the two leading journals in the field, *Sport, Ethics and Philosophy* and the *Journal of the Philosophy of Sport*, have published papers and book reviews with a spiritual and/or Christian theme (e.g., Thompson, 2011; Scarpa and Carrarao, 2011; Hopsicker, 2009; Kreider, 2003; Abe, 1986; Wertz, 1977; Hoffman, 1976). Theological ethicists interested in sport who wish to build on these foundations, have a range of theoretical options.

Sports ethicist, Parry (2011) suggests that these options include, 'Divine Command Theory' that has historically dominated Christian ethics but also a number of well-used ethical frameworks that have a theological basis. Examples are the virtue ethics of Aristotle and

MacIntyre (e.g., Goodson, 2012; McNamee, 2011, 2008), Paley's Utilitarianism and Aquinas's Natural Law theory. Other theological investigations of morality in sport that have concentrated on the sin of pride and the virtue of humility (Watson, 2012a; Watson and White, 2007), have in-part utilised the Catholic model of the 'Seven Deadly Sins' (i.e., wrath, greed, sloth, pride, lust, envy and gluttony) to examine sports experience, drawing specifically on interpretations of this concept from pastoral-theology (Capps, 1987) and psychiatry (Menninger, 1973). Helpfully, Parry (2011: 21) outlines a range of topics that could be addressed using the ethical theories suggested above:

- The application of the insights of theological thinkers to ethical issues in sport (e.g., Augustine)
- The understanding of religious practices in relation to sport (e.g., prayer)
- The clarification and exploration of theological concepts, and their relevance in sporting environments (e.g., evil, sin and redemption)
- The significance of religious beliefs in terms of social and lifestyle issues (e.g., Christian beliefs and sporting identity)
- The application of religious morality to sporting practices
- The interpretation of sporting events, institutions and relationships in religious terms
- The critique of sport from a theological point of view

Drawing on the sport ethics literature and applying some of the Christian ethical theories outlined above, anthologies and monographs by Kelly (2012), Lixey *et al*., (2012), Watson and Parker (2012), Parry, Nesti and Watson (2011: Part I), Deardorff and White (2008), Parry *et al*., (2007), Hoffman (2010a, 1992a), Feeney (2006, 1995), Higgs and Braswell (2004), Higgs (1995), Heintzman, Van Andel and Visker, (1994/2006), Baum and Coleman (1989) and Novak (1967/1994), contain numerous chapters discussing ethical sporting dilemmas and

proffer ways to bring redemption to the sporting institution. Along these lines, there is also an emerging body of empirical research and essays that seek to shed further light on this subject matter.

Empirical qualitative research in this field is relatively scarce but that which does exist, features: examinations of how Christian athletes negotiate the paradoxical cultures and norms of elite-competitive sport and Christianity (Stevenson, 1997, 1991; also see, Schroeder and Scribner, 2006; Curry, 1988), the experience of athletes in Christian sports leagues (Dunn and Stevenson, 1998) and a case study exploring how a Christian intercollegiate coach at an evangelical American college responds to the dominant values of competitive sport (Bennett et al., 2005, also see Hunt, 1999). Scholars have also explored embodiment in relation to identity-construction in Christian physical education teachers (Macdonald and Kirk, 1999; Macdonald, 1998; also see, Riesen, 2007) and the notion of 'athletic identity' through a theological and psychological lens (Watson, 2011b). Closely related to this work are educational studies in sporting locales (in particular physical education) that have a strong moral and spiritual underpinning. These studies have drawn variously on Kohlberg's (1984) theory of the 'stages of moral development' (building on Jean Piaget's theory of cognitive development), Aristotelian and Platonic ethics, Ignation spiritual pedagogies, theological virtue ethics and the educational doctrine within the philosophy of Olympism (e.g., Lixey, 2012a; Naggi, 2012; Costantini, 2011; McNamee, 2011, 2010[64]; Robinson, 2007; Parry, 2007b; Feeney, 1995; Arnold, 2001, 1999, 1997; Shields, 1996; McIntosh, 1979a). This corpus of work is intimately related to the literature on 'moral reasoning' and 'character development' in sport (e.g., Stoll and Beller, 2008), and how competition in sport is understood.

The theme of competition in sport, the 'win-at-all-costs' culture and the possible moral issues that this may engender, is the central theme of a number of scholarly works with a Christian emphasis that are helpful to contextualise this empirical work and which reflect the importance of psychological insight in this area of study (e.g., Shields and Bredemeier, 2012, 2011b, 2009; Watson, 2011b; Clifford and Feezell, 2009; Weir, 2008; Watson and White, 2007; Henkel, 2007; Grace, 2000; Spencer, 2000; Koch, 2005c, 1994; Robinson, 1997; Aitken, 1989; Hoffman, 1986; Higgs, 1983; also see, Walker, 1980). Intense, and often unhealthy competition between nations to top the Olympic and Paralympic medal table has also been evidenced and is closely tied to a quest for geo-political power on the world stage (De Bosscher *et al*., 2008; Close, Askew and Xin, 2007), which Higgs (1982) suggests is frequently rooted in pride of heart.

Ethicists, psychologists, philosophers, theologians and those involved in sports ministry[65] that have examined the nature of 'sport competition', have wrestled with a number of challenging questions. These include: how might one define sport and competition? Is competitive sport ethically defensible, considering it always produces a zero-sum outcome—a winner and loser? Can Christianity transform the potentially negative elements of zero-sum outcomes into mutual benefits? How do sporting opponents 'compete' and/or 'cooperate' with one another, in the quest for excellence? Does sport build positive Christian character, can it be measured, and if so, how might one define it? Does participation in competitive sport augment or lessen 'moral reasoning' in the athlete? Do athletes with Christian beliefs demonstrate higher levels of moral reasoning than non-believers, and thus behaviour in-line with the biblical code, and if not, why not?

Etymologically, sport competition can be understood as a 'mutual striving together for excellence' (Greek, *arête*)[66] in which opponents honour their opponent and cooperate to bring out the best in one another (see Weinberg and Gould, 2011a; Kretchmar, 1995; Hyland, 1988, 1978, also see, Newman, 1989; Mead, 1937).[67] There are important links here to Pauline athletic metaphors and the meaning of 'challenge' or 'contest' in sporting competition, in the original Greek, the *agon*, a term that the 'apostolic athlete', Paul, regularly used to help describe the ethics of the Christian life in his broader eschatological vision (see Brock, 2012; White, 2012a; Pfitzner, 2012, 1967). Of course, in the emotionally charged world of sport, this ideal sometimes dissolves into '… alienation and violence' and a host of other moral issues (Hyland, 1988: 177; see also Young, 2011; Trothen, 2009; Messner, 1990; Bredemeier *et al*., 1987; Bredemeier and Shields, 1986, 1985). This has led some social-scientists and psychologists to question whether sporting competition is ethically defensible at all, or whether it can assist in building positive character (e.g., Kohn, 1992[68]; Olgilvie and Tutko, 1971). Nevertheless, the general consensus amongst scholars from across the disciplines, according to Lixey (2012a), McNamee (2011) and Watson and White (2007), is that sporting competition is essentially 'good' and has the potential to lead to positive outcomes such as mutual excellence and friendship and the development of positive (Christian) character attributes. There is, however, limited empirical evidence to support this complex thesis (Coakley, 2011), in-part, because of the many variables that White (2012a: 14, ft., 54)[69] acknowledges are '… difficult to isolate when analysing empirical and anecdotal evidence for and against' the theory that sport builds character.

Stoll and Beller's (2008) longitudinal (over 20 years) sports ethics research demonstrates that athletes in American Christian and secular schools show little, if any, difference, in moral reasoning and that Christian athletes have a tendency to compartmentalise their faith and exclude it from competitive sport (see also Erdozain, 2012b; Bell, Johnson and Peterson, 2011; Shields and Bredemeier, 2011a, 2010, 2005, 1995; Weinberg and Gould, 2011b; Storch et al., 2004; Storch and Storch, 2002b; Storch et al., 2001; Bredemeier and Shields, 2005; Shields, *et al*., 2005; Mara and Barber, 2000; Beller *et al*., 1996). Such an approach that accepts unethical and violent behaviour on the field of play but not off it, is what Walsh and Guilianotti (2007: 1) aptly term 'white line fever' (also see, Upton, 2011), whereby 'sporting arenas are special spheres where the rules of life do not apply'. An example of this is illustrated in the normativity of explicit violence in Canadian ice-hockey participation and fandom (Klein and Austen, 2011; Trothen, 2009).

Commenting on this theme and on Stoll and Beller's findings, Watson (2011b) advocates the need to balance the spiritual development of the 'heart' of the athlete, or fan (Proverbs 4:23; Matthew 12:34), with sound ethical/biblical instruction and habitual practice of virtuous behaviour. This is largely based on the theological proposition that it is not 'self-control' that is the master Christian virtue but rather 'surrender of self' to Christ, in which both the motivations of the heart and the ethical knowledge accrued through instruction (McNamee, 2011) play a determining role in sporting attitudes and behaviours (Worthington and Berry, 2005)[70]. This thesis, is in some way, supported by McNamee (2011: 41), who by drawing on Aristotelian ethics, observes that moral behaviour in sport is a combination of virtuous action and 'emotional sensibility' (of the heart?)[71], which makes up a '… fuller model of virtue development'.

Of course, the notion of 'self-control' in moral reasoning is deeply embedded in the psyche of nations (e.g., American) founded on the Protestant work ethic and the moral imperatives of Calvinism and Puritanism (e.g., emphasising individual calling and moral perfection). Sociologist, Overman (2011: 61), has argued that the '… great Protestant delusion was (and is) that human existence is shaped by human will'. He defines 'seven Protestant virtues' (with apologies to Thomas Aquinas) that characterise American (and other largely Protestant nations), culture and sport and: (i) worldly asceticism (ii) rationalisation (iii) goal-directed behaviour (iv) achieved status (v) individualism (vi) work ethic, and (vii) time ethic. This said, 'self-control' is a biblical virtue that is essential to the Christian life and sport. But as Taylor (2007: 497-498) has observed, 'moralism' (i.e., the autocratic application of codes of behaviour) and in-turn, a repression of bodily pleasures in the modern secular project (Erdozain, 2010), has largely failed to inculcate Christian moral and ethical behaviour and character:

> This [moralism] is perhaps not an outlook which is easy to square with a reading of the New Testament, but it nevertheless achieved a kind of hegemony across the broad reaches of the Christian Church in the modern era. The outlook ends up putting all the emphasis on what we should do, and/or what we should believe, to the detriment of spiritual growth.

The result of a legalistic and mechanized approach to sport (versus the play ethic), what Brock (2012: 19) calls a '… *culture of individualized economic competition*' and '…

introspection' entrenched in capitalist ideology (also see, Bellah, 2007; Vitz, 1977/1994; Lasch, 1980), is clearly demonstrated in a large body of sport and exercise psychology research. Of particular interest here is the significant literature that indicates the prevalence of physical and psychological 'burnout and overtraining' in elite adult and youth sport (Smith, Lemyre and Raedeke, 2007). The prevalence of such a condition, we argue, is a direct consequence of the obsessive, driven and results-oriented protestant 'work-ethic' (and Marxist ideologies) that has shaped modern life and professional sport in many western nations (Overman, 2011; Guttman, 1978/2004; Weber, 1958). Catholic sports scholars, for example, Novak (1967/1994), have warned against this ethos and called for a renaissance of the 'play ethic' in sport, yet such calls have largely fallen on deaf ears.

Relatedly, other psychiatric, philosophical and theological writings (see Watson, 2011b)[72] and quantitative studies from the fields of 'clinical sport psychology' and 'religion and health' on sports performers (especially American university student athletes) have recorded a wide range of maladaptive responses from participating in sports that are permeated with questionable ethical practices (Zenic, Stipic and Sekulic, 2011; Cavar, Sekulic and Culjak, 2010; Rodek, Sekulic and Pasalic, 2009; Storch and Farber, 2002; Storch et al., 2003, 2002; Storch and Storch, 2002a; Storch, Storch and Adams, 2002; Storch et al., 2001; Begel and Burton, 2000). These include clinical levels of social and competitive anxiety, substance abuse, eating disorders, narcissistic tendencies, and moral emotions, such as guilt, shame, depression, suicide and suicidal ideation, which research has also demonstrated in athletes that have suffered career-ending injuries, retirement and de-selection (especially in professional sports, see Watson, 2011b; Null, 2008a). An important caveat in this research, is that religiousness in American university sport students (male and female), has been found to have a significant buffering affect against binge (alcohol) drinking and drug taking (e.g.,

Zenic, Stipic and Sekulic, 2011; Cavar, Sekulic and Culjak, 2010). Bearing in mind the moral malaise surrounding 'Jock Culture' in modern sports settings, in particular university sport settings (Waldron, Lynn and Krane, 2011; Sparkes, Partington and Brown, 2007; Martens, 1979), these results elucidate the importance of further psychological research from a Christian viewpoint that is to-date limited (see Nesti, 2011, 2007a,b,c; Watson, 2011b; Lynn, Pargament and Krane, 2010; Smith, 2010; Watson and Nesti, 2005; Peña, 2004; Cook, 1985). Additional ethical enquiry to complement and underpin this body of work will be crucial if we are to begin to counter the wave of systemic moral problems in global sports, not least from trained theologians and Christian psychologists and ethicists.

In concluding their recent essay on sports ethics, Scarpa and Carraro (2011: 120) identified '… a commonality and reciprocity of values between sports and Christian ethics' that should encourage scholars to explore a gamut of ethical questions in the sporting domain. Of course, resources from the sports philosophy field and those from the embryonic literature on theology and sport, discussed here are a solid foundation from which to begin this task. Importantly, however, academics might also more fully engage with the foundational writings of the early Church fathers, Christian philosophers and medieval theologians. For example, Tertullian, Philo, Augustine, John Chrysostom, John Cassian and Thomas Aquinas, who provided exegesis on Pauline athletic metaphors (e.g., Cor. 9: 24-27) and ideas surrounding embodiment in response to different gnostic heresies (typically dualisms) and pagan and gladiatorial sports that have emerged down the ages (see Koch, 2012; Pfitzner, 2012; Scarpa and Carraro , 2011; Hoffman, 2010a, Ch. 1; Carter, 1984b). Major theologians, from both Catholic and protestant traditions, during the twentieth century, have made passing reference to sport in their ethical musings (e.g., Bonhoeffer, 1955; Barth, 1981)[73], with Moltmann (1989, 1980, 1972) being an exception having written specific papers on the ethics

of modern Olympic games and a book on the theology of play. This said, during the last 80 years a succession of Popes, drawing chiefly on catholic moral theology (e.g., Curran, 2005)[74] and reflections on culture (e.g., Rowland, 2003), have used what Pope Pius XII called the 'Sport Epistle'—Paul's Corinthian correspondence, in particular his athletic metaphors (Koch, 2012)—as a framework for cultural reflection when delivering homilies and speeches in sporting locales (see Lixey *et al*., 2012; Mazza, 2012; White, 2012a; O'Gorman, 2010a, Ch. 6; Müller and Schäfer, 2010; Liberia Editrice Vaticana, 2006; Feeney, 2006, 1995). This is encouraging, although further catholic and protestant biblical and systematic theological study is paramount, if the discourse on sport is to advance in credibility and depth.

A recent conference on 'Christian Ethics and Sport' (2011) hosted by the well-respected *Society for the Study of Christian Ethics*[75] and three international seminars hosted by the Vatican's 'Church Sport' office (2009, 2008, 2005) that addressed (amongst other things) the ethical dimension of sport, is a promising sign that the discipline of theology and the Church is beginning to take sport more seriously. This work is complemented by the vital contributions of Christian ethicists who have helped counter the insightful but largely trans-humanist and post-humanist literature (e.g., McNamee, 2010[76]; Miah, 2010, 2004; Butryn and Masucci, 2009; Tamburrini and Tannsjo, 2005), addressing genetic enhancement technology in sport (Trothen, 2012, 2011, 2008a,b; The President's Council on Bioethics, 2003). Applying MacIntyre's (2007) virtue ethics, Goodson (2012) analyses both genetic sport technologies and performance-enhancing drugs, which have plagued professional sport for decades. This genre of work will continue to be important, given that 'creating a super-athlete' (Green, 2007:171) amidst futurological movements (i.e., trans-humanism and post-humanism) that have been recognised as 'new religions' (Hefner, 2009; Amarasingam, 2008), will undoubtedly be on the agenda for those wedded to the 'victory-cult'. Related

technological innovations from the fields of robotics, artificial intelligence, nanotechnology and cognitive science, may also begin to infiltrate the sports world and thus will need careful attention from theologians. In order to provide sound ethical and theological reflection on the interface between humans and technology in sport, Watson (2011b) has urged scholars to embed their reflections in a sound biblical anthropology and psychology—Christian personhood (e.g., Miller and Delaney, 2005, Section II[77]; John Paul II, 1997; Schwobel and Gunton, 1991; McFadyen, 1990; Chambers, 1936/1962).

Further research questions and topics that require Christian ethical attention include: how can classic devotional literature, such as the writings of Thomas á Kempis, Oswald Chambers, Francois Fenelon, Andrew Murray and C.S. Lewis, be used to reflect on ethical issues in sport and the need for humility, love and 'spiritual growth' of the heart (Gal. 5: 22-25), so to produce accessible literature (e.g., White and White, 2006; Fellowship of Christian Athletes, 2008) for athletes, coaches and parents (see Goodson, 2012; Kretchmar, 2012; Simmons, 2011; Kluck, 2009b; Holowchak, 2008; Hastings and DelleMonache, 2007; Watson and White, 2007)?[78] Closely linked to this, scholars could further examine what constitutes Christian character in sports competition, and how 'moral codes' of behaviour and typologies of good character, fit, if at all, with the many biblical biographies, such as that of King David, where multiple moral failures are evident?[79] How, or to what extent, can Christians endorse or participate in violent[80] sports, such as boxing and cage-fighting (also known as mixed martial arts/ultimate fighting) that mirror the gladiatorial contests of ancient Rome and the Pankration of Ancient Greece (see Spencer, 2011; Gore, 2011; Dixon, 2007; Marty, 2007; Simon, 2007; Seesengood, 2006a,b; Goldstein, 1998; Leone and Leone, 1992; Nixon, 1992; Messner, 1990; Poliakoff, 1987, 1984; Brock and Watson, forthcoming)?[81] Can Christians morally justify partaking in animal hunting, as a competitive sport (see Peiser, 1997; Morgan

and Meier, 1995[82]; Campolo, 1988)? What are the Christian ethical questions that surround participation in alternative/extreme sport forms, for example, in relation to the tension between risk-taking and paternalism (see Watson, 2007b; McNamee, 2010[83], 2007b)?

How do models of 'servant leadership' in sport, rather than 'top-down' leadership styles, inform the ethical practice and effectiveness of sports leaders (see Dungy, 2010, 2008; Rieke, Hammermeister and Chase, 2008; Greenleaf, 1977/2002; Degraaf, Jordan and Degraaf, 1999)? What are the tensions surrounding notions of the modern sporting celebrity and idolatry and is there theological justification for sporting celebrities to 'sell the gospel' (i.e., 'platform ministry) based on their fame and human abilities? This is what Macarthur (2003: 40), in support of others (Brock, 2012; Watson, 2012a,b), calls 'posturing from positions of prestige', which he argues is the antithesis of the gospel (1 Cor. 1: 27-29; Phil. 2: 5-11)? Any scholar pursuing this avenue of research should, Ward (2011) suggests, guard against the danger of being sucked into judgmentalism when theologizing about specific celebrities, as we may so easily become Gods ourselves.[84] There are also a number of broader research topics that are emerging at the present time, which raise a whole host of ethical questions.

According to many social scientists and theologians, we live in a 'fatherless generation' that is characterized by family breakdown and dysfunction and which is leading to social and moral fragmentation (e.g., Kay, 2009; Sowers, 2010; Marx, 2003; Blankenhorn, 1995). Recognising this as the socio-cultural context in which sport is experienced, raises a number of related ethical questions. What are the historical spiritual roots of fatherlessness in our age, and what does the biblical narrative suggest as a remedy for this problem (see Harper, 2012; Aune, 2010; Sowers, 2010; Stibbe, 2010)? How can sport be used as a vehicle to 'father'

(bonding) and ‘mentor’ children and youths and thus inculcate desirable character attributes and practices for healthy civil engagement (see Kay, 2009)? In turn, how can sport be used as a means of developing strong family bonds and relations? What is the role and impact of ‘fatherlessness’ on the prevalence of moral and ethical concerns in professional and amateur sport? How can coaches, physical educators and support staff, such as sport psychologists and club chaplains, through sensitive pastoral care and leadership, help to counter the deleterious effects of fatherlessness (see Brown, 2012; McCuaig, Öhmans and Wright, 2011; Dzikus, Waller and Hardin, 2010; Liberia Editrice Vaticana, 2008; McGuire, Cooper and Park, 2006; Waller, Dzikus and Hardin, in press)? Disability sport is another broad area of research that warrants attention from a Christian standpoint.

Building on recent research in sports ethics (Jesperson and McNamee, 2009), theology (e.g., Brock and Swinton, 2012; Swinton, 2011) and embryonic work on the theology of disability sport (e.g., Watson, 2012a,b; Watson and Parker, 2012b; Watts, 2007; O’Keefe, 1994/2006; Watson, forthcoming[85]), there are a plethora of questions that need to be addressed in relation to a Christian understanding of physical and intellectual disability in sport. For example, what are the societal values and norms that dictate that there are markedly different funding models and levels of media and cinematic representation in physical and intellectual disability sports (e.g., Paralympics and Special Olympics) in comparison to able-bodied sports (e.g., Olympics), and relatedly, why have no celebrities emerged from the *Special Olympics*? A further area of investigation is the moral attitudes and emotions that permeate competitive sport, such as shame and guilt (McNamee, 2008; Hamilton, 2002), joy (Null, 2004), narcissism (Begel and Burton, 2000), pain and suffering (Nesti, 2007b; Howe, 2004), relational difficulties and experience of failure and success.

The content of the preceding sections reflect the key themes of scholarship that have developed in the past four decades in the sport-religion literature. The questions and topics identified at the end of each of these sections provide a start-point for further research within these subject areas. However, it is worthwhile to briefly identify a series of additional emerging research areas and related resources to stimulate further Christian reflection on modern sports.

Emerging and Needed Research

- *Theological analysis of disability sport, including reflection on institutions, such as the Paralympics and Special Olympics*. Past work in this area is sparse with a small handful of exceptions (Watts, 2007; Yong, 2007: 114-114; O'Keefe, 1994/2006), although recent publications (Watson, 2012a,b; Watson and Parker, 2012b) and a forthcoming special edition of the *Journal of Religion, Disability and Health* titled, 'Sport, Religion and Disability', which will comprise 17 papers, consisting of a mix of scholarly essays and empirical research studies, is a promising sign (Watson, forthcoming). Resources from the theology of disability that will assist scholars in addressing this topic in the sports domain include Swinton's (2011) recent 'research report' and a 'reader' on Christian theology and disability (Brock and Swinton, 2012).

- *The various uses of prayer in sport*. Whilst prayer in sport has been a topic of discussion in many publications on sport and religion, specific research has been limited. As a start point, I would argue the recent work of Hoffman (2011) and Price (2009) are the most comprehensive examinations of this topic and for a clear and

simple overview of the key themes, see Coakley's (2007) chapter. Other studies have addressed the legality of prayer in American physical education settings (Lee, 2005; Sawyer, 1997), praying to win (Kreider, 2003), providence, prayer and sport (Hamilton, 2009) and a range of empirical studies and essays that explore existential themes often with reference to psychological variables identified in the sport psychology literature (Czech and Bullet, 2007; Murray *et al*., 2005; Watson and Czech, 2005; Watson and Nesti, 2005; Czech *et al*., 2004; Lee, 2003; Park, 2000).

- *The theory and practice of sport chaplaincy*. Until recently, the majority of reflection on this topic has stemmed from the work of practising sport chaplains (Boyers, 2011, 2000; Wood, 2011; Heskins and Baker, 2006). Nonetheless, the Vatican 'Church Sport' office (Liberia Editrice Vaticana, 2008) and academic-practitioners, contend that the professional training and accreditation of chaplains in sporting locales is long overdue and thus there are numerous avenues of research to investigate (see Dzikus, Waller and Hardin, 2010; Waller, Dzikus and Hardin, 2010; Waller Dzius and Hardin, in press).

- *Theological reflection on exercise and health, two concepts that are closely linked to sports*. Some scholars have argued that health clubs and gyms have become the new Church for many, sometimes characterised by a narcissistic quest for bodily perfection (e.g., Brock, 2012; Hoverd and Sibley, 2007; Hoverd, 2005; Lelwica, 2000). Hofman (1992c: 157) has termed this phenomena as *culticus aerobicus*, in that he states: 'the horde of Sunday morning joggers … who claim to have found on the roads passing the Church what they could never find within its walls'. Similarly, the *Lord's Gym* (a word-play on *Gold's Gym*) and *Faith and Fitness* magazine in

America, is an interesting dimension of western exercise culture and the co-mingling of sports, exercise, health and religion that deserves closer academic attention. There is also a small body of work from both catholic and protestant thinkers that in recognising the body as the 'temple of the Holy Spirit', provides a more positive analysis on exercise and the pursuit of health and wellness (e.g., Thomas, 2011; Vost, 2011, 2008; Walters and Byl, 2008; Hill, 2005; Byl and Visker, 1999; Feeney, 1995; Ryan, 1986). To-date, scholars exploring this area have arguably neglected a significant body of research that has examined the relationship between religion and health (e.g., Koeing, 2008, 2001). A focal source of this research has been the *Centre for Spirituality, Theology and Health* at Duke University Medical Centre, USA. With reference to the global obesity epidemic that has multifarious causes, future studies could also apply the doctrine of gluttony and sloth (see Thomas, 2011; Hoverd and Sibley, 2007; Hoverd, 2005; Prentice and Jebb, 1995), in relation to people's eating and exercise/physical activity patterns.

- *Women, sport and the Christian religion*. There has been a paucity of theological reflection on women in sport, with the majority of academic books and papers cited in this review, at most, making only passing reference to this important topic.[86] Building on a handful of papers and chapters that have explored the role of women in the muscular Christianity movement (Millikan, 2006; Stebner and Trothen, 2002; Putney, 2001b; Chen and Zhao, 2001; Bederman, 1989; Borish, 1987; Vertinsky, 1987) and issues of embodiment/anthropology with regard to how women negotiate their femininity in male dominated sports settings (Sydnor, 2009, 2006a,b, 2005; Deardorff and Deardorff, 2008; Carmody, 1986), scholars have a wide array of questions to examine. Importantly, any subsequent work in this area should consult the burgeoning

literature on women's sports that has emerged from the social sciences since the 1960s (e.g., Bandy, 2010; Hargreaves, 2001; Scraton and Flintoff, 2002). However, as '… Christianity itself is usually depicted as naïve and repressive, a religion at odds with sophisticated critical [feminist] studies in sport' (Sydnor, 2009: 83), this will be a challenging task but one that is worth embracing to shed further light on women's engagement in the world's most popular pastime. Finally, there has been virtually no Christian scholarship to-date that has examined the links between sports participation and 'eating disorders' in women,[87] something that has become a major issue in certain sports, for example, gymnastics, cheer-leading, dance and long-distance running (see Lelwica, 2000, 1999; Quinn and Crocker, 1999).

- *Sport, religion and popular culture*. Scholars wishing to examine the social and cultural dynamics and interplay of Christianity and sports could access Niebhur's (1951) classic work, *Christ and Culture* and emerging scholarship in sport adopting the theology of 'radical orthodoxy'[88] (Meyer, 2012; Meyer and Watson, forthcoming; Sydnor, 2006a, 2003). Niebhur's 5-point typology, which has been adapted by Wittmer (2008) to examine modern sport, would be an invaluable tool for examining a plethora of socio-cultural movements, such as Victorian muscular Christianity and modern sports ministry, sport, religion and film (see Poulton and Roderick, 2009; Cashmore, 2008; Roubach, 2007; Johnston, 2006; Crosson, forthcoming[89]) and sport-faith initiatives, such as the 'Maradonian Church' (Archetti, 2002), which could be classed as a 'surrogate religion' organisation.

- *Beauty and aesthetics in traditional and alternative/extreme sports.* Drawing on recent philosophical and theological treatments of beauty and the sublime in various

sporting locales (e.g., Hübenthal, 2012; IIundian-Agurraza, 2007; Dougherty, 2007; Watson, 2007b; Stranger, 2007; Gumbrecht, 2006; Higgs, 1983), future studies could investigate this positive dimension of sports participation and spectating. Some key theological works that may assist scholars in this project are Kant (1790/1952) and Burke's (1757/1990) seminal work on the sublime and more recent treatments of beauty and aesthetics in academic theology (e.g., Dubay, 1999).

- *Relationships in sporting contexts*. Jowett and Wylleman (2006) recently noted that the study of interpersonal relationships in sport psychology is 'unexplored territory'. In support of this, Watson (2012a) has argued that while there is some reflection on relationships in the physical education and coaching literature (e.g., Martens, 2004), valuable insights provided in sports ministry and sport chaplaincy texts (e.g., Heskins and Baker, 2006; Fellowship of Christian Athletes, 2008) and popular books on coaching from a Christian perspective (Costantini and Lixey, 2011; Riesen, 2007; Brown *et al*., 2006; Wooden, 2005; Yerkovich and Kelly, 2003), there are, at present, no academic publications that specifically address relationships from a Christian worldview. This, it would seem, represents a major oversight, in that the notion of relationship is at the heart of the Christian religion. Scholars could explore issues such as listening in the 'relational encounter' utilising Buber's (1923/1958) dialogical concept of *I-Thou* (Nesti, 2007c; Watson and Nesti, 2005; Progen and DeSensi, 1984) and friendship in sport (Gallagher, 2008). Leadership is another key aspect of relations in sport and future studies may wish to explore the merits of the Christian based 'servant leadership' model (Greenleaf, 1977/2002) that has recently been applied to sport and recreation contexts (Rieke, Hammermeister and Chase, 2008;

Degraaf, Jordan and Degraaf, 1999).

Conclusion

The aim of this systematic review of literature has been twofold: (i) to comprehensively identify, critically appraise and synthesise scholarship, primary empirical research and initiatives on the relationship between sport and Christianity primarily from 1850 to the present day, and (ii) to identify areas for future research and scholarship and provide related resources. The themed sections and emergent research topics outlined above (see also, appendix 1) provide conceptual and theoretical direction for future empirical research and scholarship. In addition to this research focus, teachers from all levels of tertiary education looking to design courses on sport and religion (Christianity) could adopt accessible summary chapters on the topic, which will serve as introductory reading for pre-university students and undergraduates (e.g., Jarvie, 2012; Delaney and Madigan, 2009; Coakley, 2007; Woods, 2007).

In conclusion, whether it is in the domain of research, teaching or practice, individuals engaged in the sport-Christianity field will need to adopt a critical and careful hermeneutic in their endeavours. If we fail to effect positive change in sports, President Barack Obama's (2008: 9) prophetic warning about American societal structures may be true for the institution of sport: '... if we don't change course soon, we may be the first generation in a very long time that leaves behind a weaker and more fractured America than the one we inherited'. On a more positive tack, if we are to leave behind a stronger and more virtuous model of sport the 'course' we must take, according to Queen Elizabeth II must be guided by Christian philosophy. Indeed, in her Christmas Speech of 2010 that focussed on the 400th year

celebration of the *King James Bible* and the central unifying role of sport in society, Her Majesty observes:

> … King James may not have anticipated quite how important sport and games were to become in promoting harmony and common interests. But from the scriptures in the bible which bears his name, we know that nothing is more satisfying than the feeling of belonging to a group who are dedicated to helping each other: Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them.[90]

Let us then hope that there is a similar common vision and dedication to assist one another within the diverse group of scholars, sport-faith practitioners, participants and teachers of sport, as they seek to combat the 'ludic diffusion' that Guttman (1978/2004) identified over three decades ago.

Note for Routledge Editorial Staff: APPENDIX 1 (in separate Word file) to be located here. This is the table titled: '**Academic and Practitioner Developments for Sports and Christianity during the last 60 Years'**

Endnotes

[1]These include sociology, history, anthropology, philosophy and psychology.

[2]See the 'overview table' in Appendix 1 that provides a concise summary of academic and practical developments in the area. This is a helpful resource and reference point for readers wishing to grasp an historical snapshot of developments and resources in the field as they read individual sections of this review.

[3]For a brief overview of the sport-religion relationship, see Baker (2010) and Mathisen (2005).

[4]To our knowledge, the only 'literature reviews' on 'sport and religion' (not specifically Christianity) are those of Higgs (1982) and Deardorff, (2000), the latter being an updated and revised edition of Higg's earlier work.

[5]For example, the exegesis and use of Pauline athletic metaphors, the principles of medieval sport and the perspectives of the Church Fathers (Patristic writings) on physical education and culture.

[6]While there are other thematic sections that could be included in this review, for example, 'sport, religion and popular culture' (see Cusack, 2010; Price, 2001a; Coakley, 2007; Edwards, 1973) and 'institutions (e.g., the Olympic Games) and governance of sport' (see Overman, 2011, 1997; Baker, 2000a; Gutmann, 1978/2004; Watson and Parker, under review), these are beyond the scope of this work.

[7]There have been a number of academic books on sport and Christianity published in the German and Italian languages, most notably by Alois Koch who has had some of his academic papers and book chapters translated into English and which are available online, see: http://www.con-spiration.de/koch/#english. In addition, the *Religioni e Società* (trans. *Italian Review of the Sociology of Religion*, 2011: Vol. 71) has recently published a special edition on 'sport and spirituality' (only available in Italian) and *Stadion: International Journal of History* (2009: Vol. 35) published a special edition on 'sport and religion' that comprises of essays in English, German and French.

[8]For example, while the numerous biographies of Christian sportspersons (e.g., Tebow, 2011; Dungy, 2008; Keddie, 2007), devotional literature (e.g., Lipe, 2005; O'Toole, 2001) and post-graduate theses provide invaluable insights for academic researchers, they are beyond the scope of this review. For a comprehensive list of sport-faith biographies, PhD and Masters theses on sport and Christianity, see Stuart Weir's 'Sport and Christianity Booklist' online bibliography: http://www.veritesport.org/downloads/Sports_bibliography_shorter.pdf (accessed 23 August 2011).

[9]Details concerning the individuals discussed in this section have been verified through email correspondence and personal communication with the individuals concerned.

[10]Two decades later the American periodical, *Christianity Today* (1986, April 4), published a special edition on sports.

[11]Some key books included: Edwards (1973), Brasch (1970), Miller (1969), Neale (1969), Weiss, (1969), Slusher (1967) and Callois (1958). Oft-cited chapters and journal articles included were: Deford (1979), Dirksen (1975), Miller (1971), Hogan (1967) and Wenkert (1963).

[12]Novak's book is widely cited across the academic disciplines and is acknowledged by *Sports Illustrated*, as one of the 'Top 100 Sports Books of All Time' (Cited in December 16, 2002, issue of *Sports Illustrated*: http://www.michaelnovak.net/index.cfm?fuseaction=bookshelf.welcome&id=18 (accessed 23 October 2011).

[13]Michael Novak, a philosopher, theologian, and author, is the 1994 recipient of the Templeton Prize for Progress in Religion. He has been an emissary to the United Nations Human Rights Commission and to the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe. He has written twenty-seven books on the philosophy and theology of culture, especially the essential elements of a free society (Cited at: http://www.aei.org/scholar/44). For further details, see Novak's personal webpage: http://www.michaelnovak.net/

[14]Following Hoffman's (1992) anthology he published a number of other papers (e.g., Hoffman, 2003, 1999).

[15]White (2012b) has written a 'review article' of Hoffman's (2010a) recent book, exploring, in particular, theological dualism in this work.

[16]An article based on a chapter of Hoffman's (2010) book has been published in the periodical, *Christianity Today* (Hoffman, 2010b), whose current managing editor Mark Galli (2010, 2005) also has an interest in the topic. Also, Hoffman (2012) has republished a chapter from his book (Hoffman, 2010a).

[17]Kinesiology is an American term and is broadly speaking synonymous in its usage with the disciplinary descriptors, 'sports studies' and 'sports sciences'.

[18]These scholarly essays include: Maranise, 2009; Sydnor, 2009, 2006a, 2005; Munoz, 2009; Nesti, 2007c; Hastings, 2004; Miroslaw, 2003; Savant, 2003; Cronin, 2000; McDevitt, 1997; Gems, 1993; Kerrigan, 1986; Ryan, 1985; Söll, 1972.

[19]Cited in Johnston (1983: unnumbered page prior to the introduction).

[20]Geertz (1973: 412-454) classic essay, *Deep Play: Notes on the Balinese Cockfight*, explores rituals and social interactions between those involved in illegal cockfighting in Indonesia in the 1950s. He examines how the experience of the risk of arrest (mainly due to betting large amounts of money) and potential loss, or gain, of social status that characterizes illegal cock fighting, leads to moments of 'deep play' in which individuals transcend the rational (a key aspect of play) for short periods of time.

[21]See 'Selected Bibliography on Play (and Work)', prepared by Herbert F. Lowe for *Religion Online* that was originally published in Johnston (1983: 163-166) and which is available online: http://www.religion-online.org/showchapter.asp?title=3366&C=2763 (accessed 26 October 2011).

[22]The relationship between play, games and competitive sports has been an important topic in the history of the philosophy of sport literature. Section 1 of Morgan and Meier's (1995: 1-66) book that focuses on 'Ontological Frameworks' and is titled, *The Nature of Play, Sport and Games*, while dated, is arguably the most diverse and academically rigorous collection of essays. Articles by pioneering modern sport philosophers, such as Bernard Suits, Klaus Meier and Scott Kretchmar, alongside classic essays by pioneering play scholars, such as Huizinga,

make this edited collection invaluable for those wishing to understand the complexities of this topic. The section on metaphysics in Weiss's (1969) seminal book and Part 1 of McNamee's (2010: 9-92) recent 'reader' on sports ethics, titled, 'The Roots of Sports Ethics: Games, Play, Sports,' are also helpful for examining play.

[23]This quote was cited in Mathisen (2005: 281), whose chapter we would like to acknowledge was very helpful in charting the historical developments of the study of play for this section.

[24]While Söll's (1972) chapter on a catholic of sport theology (mainly based on the work of German catholic theologians) does not specifically address play, there is some reflection on this point, as in later catholic writings (Feeney, 2006, 1995).

[25]Section 4 of this text, titled, *Play, Sport and Athletics*, has 7 essays that to varying degrees discuss the role of play in modern sport.

[26]These are: 'the discharge of surplus energy (Herbert Spencer, J.C. Friedrich von Schiller);…relaxation, as recuperation from exhaustion (G.T.W. Patrick and Moritz Lazarus); … an internal educator (Karl Groos); as a means of catharsis, a safety valve to vent emotions (Aristotle); as a creative modelling of situations that enables the player to better handle experience (Erik Erikson); as a means of resolving psychic conflict (Sigmund Freud), or, on the contrary, as activity *not* motivated by the need to resolve inner conflict (Robert Neale)' (Johnston, 1983: 32).

[27]While Johnston (1983) writes from a protestant perspective, his considerable positive engagement with key catholic scholars, such as Novak, Pieper and Rahner, in many ways makes this text transcend theological and ecclesiological boundaries.

[28]Johnston's (1983) discussion of C.S. Lewis's autobiography (*Surprised by Joy*, 1955, New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, Harvest Books.), in which Lewis describes his joyful play experiences in childhood that had a transcendent dimension, has clear links to more recent theological treatments of joy in sports (Null, 2004).

[29]Waller's (2010) resent research on play, leisure and sport in the 'black church' is a positive sign that churches are beginning to recognize the value of play and sport.

[30]Cultural Marxist, Gruneau (1980), provides a thorough and balanced analysis of classical Marxist critiques of sport (Rigauer, 1981; Brohm, 1971), while also considering Novak's (1967/1994) theological position on play and Guttman's (1978/2004) Weberian analysis of modern sport and play.

[31]The *flow* construct comprises nine dimensions (Jackson and Csikszentmihalyi, 1999): a balance between perceived challenges and skills, having clear goals, having a sense of control over one's actions, merging of action and awareness, receiving unambiguous feedback, being fully concentrated on the task, not being self-

conscious, loss of time awareness, and the end result an *autotelic* experience (a high level of intrinsic satisfaction).

[32]Research from the religion-health field has also identified clear links between 'sacred [playful] moments' in a range of human endeavours, including sports, as a means to enhancing physical and emotional health and well-being (King, 1986).

[33]Spiritual experience based on the premise that spiritual revelation is received during the experience.

[34]Work by Moore (2012), Heintzman (2003a,b), Watson (2007b) and Price (1996), explores spiritual, mystical, numinous experiences in alternative sports (sometimes called extreme sports) and activities that are often undertaken in wilderness/nature-based environments and which may involve opportunity for contemplation in nature, risk-taking and experiences of the sublime etc.

[35]In Hubbard's (1998: 156) popular book that documents the lives and sports careers of Christian (and Muslim) athletes, there are a number of allusions to this idea. For example, in summarizing the testimony of Loren Roberts, an American professional golfer, he reported that, 'When golf was his God, he realized, he was putting incredible pressure on himself. When he placed God first, family second, and golf third, he began to relax—essential for a sport that is as much mental as physical'.

[36]Bart's theological musings regarding Wolfgang Amadaeus Mozart's playful creativity and imaginative expression of his gift (Metzger, 2003), has been used in previous analyses of play in sport (Watson, 2011b).

[37]*L'Arche* (French for Ark) is a Catholic, yet wholly ecumenical, international federation of 137 communities in 40 countries, where people with and without learning difficulties live in community. Its founder is Jean Vanier, a pioneer, celebrated writer and practitioner in this area.

[38]As McGrath (2008) suggests, the muscular Christian movement was largely protestant in origin but not exclusively, with a range of catholic related initiatives and educational institutions that adopted its principles.

[39]The majority of books cited in this review and Appendix 1 have chapters or sections that reflect on muscular Christianity.

[40]While discussion in this section focuses on neo-muscular Christian sports ministry organizations, it is important to recognize, that in general, sports chaplaincy practice in America is sometimes more closely tied to the evangelical concerns of sports ministry organizations. However, in the United Kingdom, the practice of sports chaplaincy is more traditional in that it focuses on pastoral concerns of athletes and club support staff. Of course the degree to which this statement is true varies greatly in regard to context, denominational differences in chaplaincy practice and the policy of the sports club at which the chaplain works.

[41]For scholars wishing to examine the historical development of muscular Christianity in Anglican and Non-Conformist churches in the UK, McLeod (2003) has provided a chronological map with five broad phases (also see, Parker and Weir, 2012).

[42]A caveat in regard to the strength and significance of the historical and philosophical relationship between muscular Christianity and the YMCA, is that some administrators and evangelists within the YMCA disavowed the phrase muscular Christianity (Erdozain, 2010).

[43]See Parry (2007a), Lucas (1976, 1975) and Koch (2005a) for further information with regard to the links between 'muscular Christianity' (and religion) and the modern Olympic Games.

[44]The authors of a recent book that explores the win-at-all-costs culture of modern professional sport adopting a Neo-Freudian frame-work publish a verbatim transcribed interview with Jonathon Edwards that focused on his retirement from athletics and subsequent loss of his Christian faith (Gogarty and Williamson, 2009: 214-224). The interview transcript is titled, 'An Interview with Jonathon Edwards: Judgment Day – Resolving Pathology' which clearly reflects the Freudian perspective. While there has been speculation in the media regarding the degree to which Edwards has lost his faith, there is clear evidence within this transcript of this, for example: 'I didn't find losing my faith devastating. I analysed what I had always believed and it didn't seem to make sense in the way that it had done before and I just accepted it and moved on' (219).

[45]Aitken (1989) notes that the ethos of muscular Christianity became very popular in American Catholic universities from around the 1950s, for example, Georgetown, Notre Dame, Boston College and St. John's.

[46]Kevin Vost, a former Olympic weightlifter and well-known academic Catholic apologist, has written two books (Vost, 2011, 2008) that focus on exercise, weightlifting and healthy eating that have clear links to muscular Christian ideals (see West, 2011).

[47]An interesting caveat regarding the relationship between Sunday schools and sport is the fact that when most UK youth soccer leagues moved to Sunday mornings in the 1990s, this had a significant negative impact upon attendance and participation in Church Sunday schools (Collins and Parker, 2009).

[48]On this point also see, Brock (2012), Erdozain (2012b) and Watson (2012a).

[49]For example, during Billy Graham's evangelistic crusades in the 1950s, Christian sporting celebrities (e.g., Jill Dodds, see Mathisen, 1990) were invited to share their testimonies, which some argue is not the typical way that authentic Christian conversion is initiated (e.g., Macarthur, 2003: 40).

[50]Cited on pages 18-19 and 45 of Brueggeman (2010).

[51]Some scholars have been very critical (perhaps overly) of athletes' who openly testify to their faith in Jesus Christ on winning a match or championship (e.g., American footballer, Tim Tebow and PGA golfers, Zach Johnson and Bubba Watson). However, we would argue that the bible teaches that it is the 'motivation of the heart' behind the testimony of the individual that determines whether or not a testimony is authentic, or not. In addition, unless the athlete explicitly states otherwise, it is oft very difficult to know whether these testimonies are to thank God for winning (which could be problematic), or, to thank God for who He is in their lives. Thus, we would urge scholars to be careful not to fall into judgementalism when analyzing the testimonies of professional athletes. See the *Foreword* of this book, for Michael Novak's reflections on this topic (e.g., Tom Tebow).

[52]In addition to sports ministry 'instruction' handbooks there are a number of sport-themed bible editions, for example, Branon's (2002) *NIV Sports Devotional Bible: Daily Inspirations for Sports Enthusiasts* that include testimonies of famous athletes.

[53]Aitken (1989: 396) argues that Wesley Neal's (1981, 1972) books provided the foundational theology for the FCA and Neal '…became the principal theologian in the movement [FCA]'.

[54]Olonga's ministry mainly involves after-dinner speaking and Church visits. In regard to Church visits (the first author has attended one), he typically sings gospel music (he is a well-respected soloist), is interviewed regarding his life as a Christian sportsperson and his experience of being extradited from Zimbabwe due to his protest against the human-rights abuses of President Mugabe, and toward the end of the evening he shares the gospel message and signs copies of his biography that are on sale (Olonga, 2010). For further information, see his personal website: http://www.henryolonga.net/container/

[55]Gibbons, Dixon and Braye's (2008) paper explores the dramatic conversion experience of an English football hooligan, who then became a well-known Christian minister in the north of England and who used his life-story within sporting locales to assist in sharing the gospel message.

[56]The following three journals are good sources of information on this topic, *Men and Masculinities*, *The Journal of Men's Studies* and *THYMOS: Journal of Boyhood Studies*.

[57]Helpful resources for these three topics are: (i) *Exegesis and hermeneutics* (Brock, 2012; White, 2012a; Pfitzner, 2012, 2009, 1981, 1967; Yinger, 2008; Seesengood, 2006a,b, 2005; Esler, 2005; Garrison, 1993; Thaden, 2003; Williams, 1999; Garrison, 1997; Gudorf, 1998; Henderson, 1997; Duff, 1991; De Vries, 1975; Ringwald, 1971; Howson, 1868; Yong, forthcoming). For specific application of Pauline athletic metaphors in modern sports ministry, see Costantini and Lixey (2011), Hoffman (2010a), Krattenmaker (2010), Ladd and

Mathisen (1999: 215-114), Mathisen (2002) and Watson (2007a). (ii) *Historical, cultural and archaeological* (see Pfitzner, 2012, 1967; Hoffman, 2010a: 41-45; O'Gorman, 2010b; Harrison, 2008; Combes, 1997; Seesengood, 2006a, 2005; Hullinger, 2004; Savage, 2004; Krentz, 2003; Fredriksen, 2002; Murphy-O'Conner, 2002; Kajava, 2002; van Nijf, 2001; Williams, 1999; Raschke, 1986; Freyne, 1989; Poliakiff, 1987, 1984; Broneer, 1971, 1962a,b). (iii) *The use of athletic metaphors to construct a 'theology of sport' and/or a 'theology of sport competition* (see Pfitzner, 2012, 2009; Brock, 2012; White, 2012a; Hoffman, 2010a; Krattenmaker, 2010; Watson, 2007a; Seesengood, 2006a; Kock, 1999; Novak, 1967/1994, Ch. 9; Freyne, 1989; Yong, forthcoming).

[58]Cited in Feeney (1995: 69).

[59]Lasch's chapter has recently been republished in a 'reader' on sports ethics (McNamee, 2010: 369-381).

[60]The ever-present threat of terrorism at sporting mega-events cannot be illustrated more clearly by the potential mooring of a Royal Naval Warship (type-45 destroyer) with air defence capability, in the Docklands of east London during the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic games (Coghlan, T., Schlesinger, F. and Savage, M. 2011. Warship Missiles may Protect Games against Terror Strikes, *The Times*, Tuesday 15 November: 5).

[61]For those wishing to critique the ethics of the modern sporting institution, Part 6 of McNamee's (2010: 363-434) 'reader' text, titled, 'Commercialism, Corruption and Exploitation in Sport', which has six essays from leading thinkers addressing the ethics of adult and child sports, is very helpful.

[62]Stoll and Beller's (2008) longitudinal research on moral reasoning in sporting contexts and related examination of whether sport builds character, stems from the *Centre for ETHICS*, University *of* Idaho, USA.

[63]It is interesting that the seminal academic book written by a Catholic philosopher (Weiss, 1969) for the discipline of the philosophy of sport had a section on metaphysics and yet this school of thought has not, until recently, received any sustained attention and has largely been divorced from ethical reflection.

[64]Part 5, titled, 'Ethical Development in and Through Sports: Rules, Virtues and Vices' in McNamee (2010: 301-362), has five essays from leading thinkers in this area of study.

[65]Greg Linville, of The Association of *Church Sports and Recreation Ministries*, has published a series of articles on the 'theology of competition' that are available online, see: http://www.csrm.org/index.html

[66]As McNamee (2011: 36-44) has noted, the concept of arête (i.e., excellence) in Greek culture was closely tied to virtue ethics, as it is in modern sport.

[67]The word 'competition' is derived from the Latin *com-petito*, which translates, 'questioning or striving together'.

[68]For a recent evaluation of the validity of Kohn's (1992) oft-cited work, see Shields and Bredemeier (2010).

[69]Also see Clifford and Feezell (2009) who provide an extensive study of this topic.

[70]The balance between the development of the heart and ethical knowledge in determining attitudes and behaviour in sport, is indicative of a much wider and vigorous historical Church debate that has continued down the centuries (especially around the Reformation period), in regard to the balance of emphasis between 'faith (leading of the heart) and reason (the bible)' or 'word (the bible) and spirit (leading of the heart)' in ecclesiological praxis in different denominations.

[71]Orthodox Christian anthropology holds that humans consist of soul, body and spirit (see 1 Thessalonians 5: 23) and the soul (or *psyche*) of the person consists of the 'will, intellect and emotions'. But fundamentally, it is our spirit that relates to God's spirit (Romans 8: 16), not our emotions/emotional sensibility. This said, McNamee's proposal of 'emotional sensibility' is interesting due to the *holistic* and inseparable nature of all aspects of human personhood that are often referred to collectively as the 'heart' (see Chambers, 1936/1962). Thus, God relates to the person via the spirit but also through the soul of the individual, the *emotions*, will and intellect (see Watson, 2011b; Miller and Delaney, 2005; John Paul II, 1997).

[72]Watson's (2011b) chapter contains reference to a wide-range of research from across the disciplines.

[73]In discussing the theology of play, Bonhoeffer (1955) touches on a range of ethical issues related to sport, as does Bart, in the *Church Dogmatics*, where he talks about the institution of sport becoming the '…playground of a particular-earth-spirit' (Barth, 1981: 229), that is, a form of idolatrous spirit that *partially* characterises institutions.

[74]There are subtle differences between catholic moral theology (closely allied to the Church magisterium) and Christian ethics, for example, as Kirk (1949: 223-224) notes, 'moral theology is concerned not so much with the highest standards of Christian conduct (that is perhaps the special province of Christian ethics) as with the *minimum* standard to which conduct must attain if it is to be adjudged Christian at all'.

[75]Plenary papers from this meeting at the University of Cambridge are to be published in a special edition of the Society's journal, *Studies in Christian Ethics*: *Christian Ethics and Sport* (2012: Vol. 25, 1, February). In response to London hosting the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic games, a number of other theological and religious studies journals are publishing special editions on sport (See Appendix 1) that have a focus on theological ethics.

[76]See Part 3, titled 'Doping, Genetic Modification and the Ethics of Enhancement' in McNamee (2010: 153-224) that includes 6 essays from key thinkers in this topic area.

[77]Section II of Miller and Delaney's (2005) book, titled, 'The Nature of the Human Person', is especially helpful. Also, see the *Journal of Psychology and Theology*, the *Journal of Psychology and Christianity* (studies of prayer in sport have been published in this journal) and the *Journal of Psychology and Judaism* for psychological insights of human nature from a Judea-Christian standpoint. A Special Edition (2005, Vol., 59, No. 4) of the journal, *Interpretation: A Journal of Bible and Theology* that focuses on biblical anthropology and biblical portraits of personhood is also a rich source of theological insights.

[78]Catholic theologian, such as Richard Rohr and the philosopher of sport, Kretchmar (2012), have challenged Christian scholars to learn about things such as humility in sport from the writings of others faiths traditions, suggesting that we can learn from supposed 'outsiders'.

[79]This is an interesting line of enquiry due to the fact that 'moralism' has failed in the modern world (see Taylor, 2007) and while personal character attributes such as consistency, trustworthiness, faithfulness, loyalty, self-control and being principled are desirable traits in a Christian, if an individual builds a reputation on these principles and glories in them, the danger of self-righteousness and religious pride always lurks at the door (i.e., moralising about others). As C.S. Lewis, (1952/1997) noted, a prostitute that knows her desperate need of God, may be far closer to Him, than a church-goer of many years that is 'highly principled' and seen as a pillar of the community. This is the offence of grace. Jesus had a total disinterest in building a reputation for himself (see Phil. 2: 1-11) and King David, after committing murder and adultery, was famously described as 'a man after God's own heart', *because* he had a broken and contrite spirit (Ps. 51), not because he always acted in a principled and ethical manner. Based on this, perhaps, Christian character could be better understood as a *combination* of moral principles evident in an individual's life but also the existence of a 'tender (broken) heart that is always willing to repent quickly' and that extends mercy and grace to those that persecute them (i.e., a state of heart that wants the offender to get off free and not to suffer consequences/punishment)?

[80]As theorists have noted (Dixon, 2007), violence and physical harm (injury) are also clearly evident in more broadly conceived 'combative sports' such as, rugby, American football etc., and thus these activities could also be a focus of research from a Christian perspective.

[81]In a recent blog on the *Sydney Anglican Network*, titled, 'The Christian and the Cage Fighter', Craig Schwarze (2010), notes that there is no literature on this topic to-date and as the controversial American pastor, Mark Driscoll, has endorsed the *Ultimate Fighting Championship* (UFC) as a vehicle to develop 'muscular Christians' in a feminized world church, academic analysis is urgently needed. Available from: http://sydneyanglicans.net/life/daytoday/the_christian_and_the_cage_fighter/ . Also, see Marty (2007).

[82]Part XVII of Morgan and Meier's (1995) book, titled, 'The Morality of Hunting and Animal Liberation' , which has 5 essays on the topic, provides a secular ethical perspective.

[83]See Part 7 of McNamee (2010: 435-500), titled, 'Ethics and Adventurous Activity', for 5 essays that address this topic.

[84]It is then interesting that the *All American Speakers Bureau and Celebrity Network* that includes the details of a number of high-profile Christian athletes (some charging up to $50,000 for one speaking engagement), advertise that 'we know the power of celebrity endorsements, stated or implied, and there are few bigger celebrities than famous athletes from the world of sports. When a top athlete makes an appearance at your corporate event, you get the benefits of his or her star power…they help give you…media and public attention' (Famous Sports Figure and Athlete Appearances, 2010: available at: http://allamericanspeakers.com/sprtspeakers/athletapperance.php0.

[85]A Special Edition (and double edition) of the *Journal of Religion, Disability and Health* titled, 'Sport, Religion and Disability' that focuses on sport and leisure will comprise 17 papers, consisting of a mix of scholarly essays and empirical research studies, will provide a start point for this research area. It is projected that this will be published in 2014 and will also be republished as a book.

[86]However, there is a significant body of scholarly publications on Christian theology, women and embodiment more generally, for example, the writings of Rosemary Radford Ruether, Sallie McFague, Marcella Athaus Reid and Ivone Gebara.

[87]While the eating disorders are far more prevalent in women's sports, this has become more and more of a problem for sportsmen, in sports such as boxing, wrestling and horse-riding (i.e., jockeys), which require the participant to reach/maintain a specific bodyweight.

[88]Radical Orthodoxy is a relatively recent school of theology-philosophy that has evolved from the writings of John Milbank, Graham Ward and Catherine Pickstock in the early 1990s (see Milbank, J and Oliver, S. (eds.) *The Radical Orthodoxy Reader*, London: Routledge, 2009). Its principal thesis, which now stems from thinkers across the Christian traditions, is that the theologian's task is to view all contemporary phenomena (i.e., explored in the social sciences) through the lens of orthodox Christian doctrine (theological ontology and epistemology) laid down in the early church creeds and writings of the Church fathers and rearticulated and interpreted by modern theological reflection, for example, in the works of protestant, Karl Bart and Catholic, Hans Urs Balthasar. This precludes that RO provides a strong attack on the paradigms of secularization in modern western culture.

[89]The chapter title that focuses on sport, film and religion has not yet been clarified.

[90]For a full transcript of the Queen's Speech(Christmas, 2010), see: http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-12079065

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