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The Spirit-Led Coach: an Alternative Approach to Athletic Coaching

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GEORGE FOX UNIVERSITY

THE SPIRIT-LED COACH:
AN ALTERNATIVE APPROACH TO ATHLETIC COACHING

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO
THE FACULTY OF PORTLAND SEMINARY
IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF MINISTRY

BY
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CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

DMin Dissertation

This is to certify that the DMin Dissertation of

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has been approved by
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The myth of a “self-made man” becomes ever apparent when working on a project such
as this.

Thank you...

To my wife for life, who has always seen something in me I often fail to see
myself. Your sacrifice has been greater than any, including my own. You are my favorite.

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ABSTRACT

The world of sports is an approximate 620 billion dollar industry,¹ claiming an attendance of a little over 124 million fans in 2016 just within the top five professional sports leagues.² In the United States alone, it is estimated 20 to 30 million kids play recreational sports, while another 10 million teenagers play interscholastically each year.³ With these factors in mind, all forms of power, greed, corruption, violence, self-indulgence, etc. has seeped its way into athletics and culture like a virus. Recently, a bleacher report revealed that findings of an FBI probe into college basketball is expected to be released soon, potentially implicating up to fifty different NCAA programs for corruption, bribery, and greed.⁴ The 330 day investigation will have huge repercussions on players and coaches, including hall of fame coaches, and some have already been arrested.⁵ From violence and sexual misconduct at Baylor University,⁶ to excusing hostile

¹ Herve Collignon, Nicolas Sultan, and Clement Santander, "The Sports Market - Global Management Consulting Firm," 2011, accessed December 3, 2016, <https://www.atkearney.com/documents/10192/6f46b880-f8d1-4909-9960-cc605bb1ff34>.

² "Global Attendances," Sporting Intelligence, January 5, 2017, accessed June 24, 2017, <http://www.sportingintelligence.com/finance-biz/business-intelligence/global-attendances/>.

³ Joe Ehrmann, Paula Ehrmann, and Gregory Jordan, *InSideOut Coaching: How Sports Can Transform Lives* (New York, NY: Simon & Schuster, 2011), 9.

⁴ Alec Nathan, "Report: Top College Basketball Coaches, Players, Programs Involved in Corruption," Bleacher Report, February 15, 2018, accessed March 3, 2018, <http://bleacherreport.com/articles/2759734-report-top-college-basketball-coaches-players-programs-involved-in-corruption>.

⁵ Espn.com News Services, "Report: FBI Probe into NCAA Corruption Identifies Possible Violations by Basketball Powers," ABC News, February 27, 2018, accessed March 3, 2018, <http://abcnews.go.com/Sports/report-fbi-probe-ncaa-corruption-identifies-violations-basketball/story?id=53385710>.

⁶ Jason Kirk, "We Finally Know More About Why Baylor Fired Art Briles," SBNation.com, October 28, 2016, accessed March 3, 2018, <https://www.sbnation.com/college-football/2016/10/28/13460830/art-briles-fired-baylor-coach-report>.

atmospheres and suing one another such as South Carolina women's basketball coach,⁷ it is safe to say sports' influence and corruption is not limited in scope, pouring out into all facets of society.⁸ With this reality, the follower of Jesus has been given opportunity to stand out and go about coaching differently.

One of many oversights in the Church past and present, is we tend to dismiss or completely forget the Spirit's activity within the throes of athleticism. Commonly, evangelicals are obsessed with sports; we are fans, participants, and coaches, yet, society at large has determined how the Christian ought to coach, versus the deep recesses of our biblical Story. From volunteers of recreational teams to paid coaches at the highest levels, there are apprentices of Jesus occupying coaching positions and very little has been written from a Christian perspective on how to engage athletics. This research and dissertation will focus on an alternative approach to athletic coaching, with an emphasis on Pentecostal theology and how the former might influence the later.

Section I will animate the problem with current coaching methodologies, touching on factors in American Church history which contribute to the problem and focusing primarily on what is called *transactional* coaching. Section II will focus and expound on three approaches to coaching, all of which generally fall under the category of transactional. Section III will flesh out pneumatology and how a "Spirit-led" approach differs from typical coaching strategies. Sections IV and V will briefly describe the

⁷ Dave Matter, "Mizzou AD Sterk Sued by South Carolina Women's Coach, Fined by SEC," *Stltoday.com*, February 22, 2018, accessed March 3, 2018, http://www.stltoday.com/sports/college/mizzou/mizzou-ad-sterk-sued-by-south-carolina-women-s-coach/article_c3d96831-9223-5f5d-9fed-9143a753e417.html.

⁸ Parag Khanna, *Connectography: Mapping the Future of Global Civilization* (New York, NY: Random House, 2017), LOC 437-444.

artifact and outline the specifics. Section VI concludes with an important benediction for all Christians, inspiring every apprentice of Jesus to apply the principles of a Spirit-led coach in their area of ministry and mission. The artifact, in written form, concludes this project.

SECTION I: THE PROBLEM

Introduction

During my freshman year of college, our soccer team had started off on the wrong foot. We were a gang of misfits who lacked motivation and direction; a community of individuals starving to be led. Early on in our season we took to the road, facing off against a team we had never lost to, something we were reminded of by our coach and senior players. Fans, family, and friends crowded the stands only to watch us fall by the score of 2-1, but they received more than they bargained. Without any debrief, our red-hot soccer coach lined us up on the side line and proceeded to chew us out while we did “down-and-back’s” for about 30 minutes.⁹ After a hard fought battle, in front of our traveling fans, we were humiliated because for the first and only time in school history, we fell short of victory against this specific team.

This was a turning point in our season. We would go 1-17-1, losing the rest of our games until a miraculous regional playoff showdown. I do not fully blame our coach for the team’s series of poor performances—we were not an easy group to lead. However, this was a typical reaction, whether we lost every game or were on a winning streak. Our soccer coach just did not know anything different; he was simply doing what he had observed and experienced from his basketball coach while he was a player.

⁹ A “down-and-back” is a sprint from one sideline or end line to the next in a designated span of time. Only in this case, our coach made us hold the push-up position before performing the “down-and-back.”

Not every Christian coach, however, operates out of fear, anger, insecurities, and the like. The head coach of a successful Oregon high school football team stated with confidence that he is not developing athletes, but leaders: “Once you have leaders, bullying does not become an issue.”¹⁰ He goes on to explain how his staff utilize the game to teach life lessons from Scripture and have cultivated a culture of asking a lot of questions. Even at a private school, however, he expressed his concern of the lack of leadership and morality within culture, coaching, and athletics at large. Women’s high school varsity basketball coach Mardy Benedict also stated his concern compared to when he played sports: “It is a whole different game when it comes to sports today. Dads are gone...culture is totally different.”¹¹ Despite the lack of discipline and broken family dynamics, he does not believe bullying and exerting power over his athletes is a way to motivate.¹²

Coaching is becoming more and more complex, especially if one lives out a biblical narrative. Coach Benedict spoke about the tension of representing Jesus while being competitive, pulling out the best from each athlete, challenging them, and setting parameters all at the same time. The current issues and problems within athletics is mounting and this section will not attempt to address them all, however, the research will make the argument that our Western mindset has been in part, shaped by Christianity. Not everything is bad or wrong, but the Church has a major role to play in the woes of current athletic coaching.

¹⁰ Matt Bane, "Christian Coaching Philosophy," telephone interview by author, September 27, 2016.

¹¹ Mardy Benedict, “Christian Coaching Philosophy,” interview by author, August 3, 2017.

¹² We will explore more of this in Section II.

What Happens in Church, Spills into Society

In the Fall of 2003, a Las Vegas tourism department brainstorming meeting took place with a goal to revolutionize the way people perceive the metropolis known as “Sin City.”¹³ In the past, Vegas has been branded as a casino and gambling destination in the middle of a desert oasis, touting no less than 30 million visitors annually since 1997.¹⁴ However, after a year of research led by ad agency R&R Partners, the team decided to launch an ad campaign based off the concept of freedom.¹⁵ The slogan “What Happens Here, Stays Here,” was cooked up and an atmosphere of “You can do whatever you want here with no consequences” was launched. The problem is, such a self-indulgent, self-centered slogan can never deliver upon its promise. A record 42 million visitors flocked to the city hoping to escape reality and indulge in the freedom of anonymity, although what happens in Vegas, inevitably spills over into all of society.¹⁶ For example, though not directly linked to Las Vegas takes on the very characteristics of the ad campaign, in July 2015 the *Ashley Madison* data hack exposed anonymous, secretive, sensitive

¹³ Samantha Shankman, "A Brief History of 'What happens in Vegas Stays in Vegas'" The Week - All you Need to Know About Everything that Matters, October 1, 2013, accessed July 1, 2017, <http://theweek.com/articles/459434/brief-history-what-happens-vegas-stays-vegas>.

¹⁴ Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority (LVCVA), “Las Vegas Stats & Facts,” Las Vegas Statistics & Frequently Asked Questions, February 1, 2017, accessed July 1, 2017, <http://www.lvcva.com/stats-and-facts/>.

¹⁵ Shankman.

¹⁶ LVCVA.

information of men and women conducting adulterous affairs.¹⁷ Nothing stays truly anonymous and the wreckage in our culture proves it.

“What Happens in Vegas, Stays in Vegas,” is actually a small piece to the whole story of the American Church. The United States as we know it, was founded on the premise of freedom; a freedom to worship in peace and harmony.¹⁸ Puritans came to the New World not to colonize, but to experiment; to privately and without interference, create a pure church as they saw appropriate. The first settlers never intended to colonize, evangelize, or territorialize in any way, although they morphed into doing so.¹⁹ This concept of freedom permeates all facets of American culture and humanity in general. We can make the calculated assumption Pilgrims simply wanted to be left alone. Individualism and privatization has been weaved throughout the fabric of our nation from her inception. As R&R Partners themselves conclude: “The emotional bond between Las Vegas and its customers was freedom...the freedom to be someone we couldn’t be at home... [The strategy is to] Speak to that need. Make an indelible connection between Las Vegas and the freedom we all crave.”²⁰

While Vegas has been tapping into a centuries old American belief, it causes more damage than one would care to admit. Though the Puritan’s meant well, what happens in private rarely stays there. In the book of Genesis, Joseph is caught in a lose/lose situation

¹⁷ Swati Khandelwal, "Ashley Madison to Pay \$11.2 Million to Data Breach Victims," The Hacker News, July 17, 2017, accessed March 3, 2018, <https://thehackernews.com/2017/07/ashley-madison-data-breach.html>.

¹⁸ Edwin S. Gaustad and Leigh Eric Schmidt, *The Religious History of America: The Heart of the American Story from Colonial Times to Today* (New York, NY: HarperOne, 2004), 51.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 54.

²⁰ Shankman.

with the wife of his master, Potiphar. Day after day, Potiphar's wife playfully and privately seduced the handsome Jewish man to sleep with her; no one will ever know. Joseph rebuffs the position of privacy the Egyptian women held and fled from disaster. In secret, Achan took foreign idols and added them to his belongings, attempting to cover up his sin. The results were extreme and costly.²¹ King David lusted, coveted, slept with a married woman, murdered her husband, and swept it all "under the rug."²² The nation of Israel felt they could get away with living a double-life by giving Yahweh their words and nothing else. The chosen people hid their deeds in the darkness, triggering some chilling words from Creator God to the prophet Isaiah, challenging the hypocrisy of Israel's ways.²³ The enemy of light tempted Jesus while alone and isolated, to worship someone besides Yahweh. Imagine the consequences if He took him up on his offer. Ananias and Sapphira felt they would get away with keeping proceeds on a portion of land through deceit, yet were struck down for it. Jesus' metaphor of disgust toward the city of Laodicea can easily be applied to today's concept of Vegas freedom: "I know your works: you are neither hot nor cold...So, because you are lukewarm...I will spit you out of my mouth."²⁴

Nothing done within the freedom of secrecy and deceit remains isolated and hidden. From the beginnings of American Christianity, infighting and splits, slander and back-biting, have marked and spilled over into the whole of society. Is the Bride of Christ

²¹ Joshua 7:1, 10-26.

²² 2 Samuel 11.

²³ Isaiah 29:13-16.

²⁴ Revelation 3:15-16.

responsible for a lot of good? Without question she was and continues to be. However, our sometimes heinous actions toward one another led the way for a “freedom to do what I want with little to no consequences” type of position. This abuse of freedom cannot be blamed solely on a lack of godliness within society, but upon the Church who struggled to fight fair, excused or ignored inappropriate conduct, and failed provide grace where it was in short supply. For example, as colonialism was in its infancy, denominations began to claim territory as Congregationalist, Anglican, Lutheran, etc. In 1651, Baptist pastor John Clarke attempted to advance a young denomination’s cause into Maryland which was Puritan territory. He and his companions were immediately arrested for this action.²⁵

Although there may have been good intentions, the amount of fighting and condemning of each other during the foundation of America is cringe worthy. Not only were Protestants and Catholics at one another’s throats, Christians were both pro-revival and anti-revival during both Awakenings, pro-war and pacifist, persecuted smaller sects of Christianity such as the Quakers, viewed and treated Natives as lesser-than, were at times violent, and found creative ways to protest, slander, provoke, and separate from one another, all under the banner of Christianity.²⁶ Territorialism brought out the worst in our Christian forefathers, leading to greed and power.²⁷ In addition to all this, it is appalling to think back at the reality of a theological divide within Christianity on slavery. One of the major reasons racial tension continues to exist can be linked to the twisting of

²⁵ Gustad and Schmidt, 69.

²⁶ Ibid., 13-14, 19, 61-62, 76-77, 81-83, 88-89, and 95.

²⁷ Nancy Koester, *Introduction to the History of Christianity in the United States* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2007), LOC 992-1009.

Scripture to advocate for such a despicable practice.²⁸ Historian Mark Noll paints a sobering picture of this divide over slavery when he asserts “America’s public culture came to pay less and less attention to the Bible in the decades after the War. One of the reasons was that Christians had paid it the wrong kind of attention before and during the War.”²⁹ Examples such as these shore up the notion that what happens within religious circles will always reflect on society at large, especially athletics. Once again, Noll illuminates the problem when quoting historian C. C. Goen in regard to the Civil War: “the ‘broken churches’ led to a ‘broken nation.’”³⁰ We can apply this statement to our current culture, into the fabric of sport and coaching, using the Catholic church’s dismal responses to reports of abuse as an example of our current brokenness.³¹ Although the Church does not take the full weight of blame in regard to the deceptive mindset of “do whatever you want without consequence,” our self-centeredness has been the cause of much turmoil and strife within society at large. Truly, the Las Vegas marketing model is false, Christians bought into it for centuries (directly or indirectly), and we are paying for it. Another edge of the problematic sword, has to do with our misguided “me-ness.”³²

²⁸ Koester, LOC 2524-2533 & 2571-2594.

²⁹ Mark A. Noll, *A History of Christianity in the United States and Canada* (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2001), 333.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 317.

³¹ David Eggert, "Bill Spurred by Nassar Scandal Concerns Catholic Church," U.S. News & World Report, February 27, 2018, accessed March 3, 2018, <https://www.usnews.com/news/sports/articles/2018-02-27/bill-spurred-by-nassar-case-concerns-catholic-church>.

³² If you notice, the “M” & “E” are found left of center within the name of our nation. I find this a little comical and intriguing, since we could be considered a highly materialistic and individualist society. The saying goes, “There is no ‘I’ in team but there is an ‘M’ and ‘E.’”

The United States of A-ME-rica

The popular Netflix show “Last Chance U” tracks a junior college football team through their crucial season, giving insight behind the scenes of a championship caliber program. The documentary is based on the premise these young athletes have one last shot at going pro and most of the athletes are fighting for recognition. Some on the football squad were dropped from a Division I NCAA school and wrestle with being demoted to a Junior College level. Many of the guys come from rough neighborhoods and struggle academically. Throughout the coaching staff, starting with the head coach on down, it is evident that only thing that matters is winning. In it’s first season, former Florida St. recruit, quarterback John Franklin III, never thought he would be playing for a JUCO.³³ Franklin makes it clear during an interview, his main goal is to do what needs to be done in order to return to playing Division I football. The Eastern Mississippi Community College (EMCC) quarterback states: “At the end of the day, yeah, it is all about the team but, you got to worry about yourself too a certain extent because I came here for one reason and one reason only and that’s to get *me* back to the level I know I’m supposed to be at.”

This documentary reveals a growing cancer within sport, from coaches to parents to the media and athletes themselves: it is all about M, E, ME. It is all about making it into the National Football League (NFL) and doing whatever it takes to get there. The players understand this, as well as the coaches. Head coach Buddy Stevens was brought to Eastern Mississippi Community College specifically because he is known to win...and

³³ Junior College or Community College.

win he has. The camera crew follows his team for an entire season, with an expectation and anticipation they will achieve three league titles in a row. The coaching staff views everything their athletes do or do not do through a narrow lens: perform well and you will get playing time. The blame for this “me” mentality does not solely fall upon the shoulders of modern day coaches.

At the risk of “beating a dead horse,” one facet of the coaching problem (the human condition as a whole) has to do with American “me-ness,” which is evidenced in documentaries such as “Last Chance U.” In other words, individualism rules while communitarianism withers away; the language of “me” and “other” has swallowed up “we” and “one another.” Examples of this can be traced to early American religion with Protestant denominations huddling, Catholic and Orthodox churches taking shots at each other and huddling as well. It seems as if every Christian denomination worried about themselves rather than celebrate different expressions of our faith, challenge what needs to be challenged with love, and cross denominational lines for the good of humankind. One such incident took place amidst World War I where Lutherans, Catholics, Mennonite, and others were hassled and threatened because of their German roots. These denominations became targets as anti-German propaganda spilled out of churches and into American society.³⁴ German Christians were labeled and harassed, amongst other things, pressured to abandon their heritage and unique Christian expression.³⁵ This World War I example is reminiscent of what is taking place today within America—where it seems no one is allowed to hold an alternative opinion as another without being labeled,

³⁴ Koester, LOC 4803-4814.

³⁵ Ibid., LOC 4814-4822.

harassed, or pressured to abandon, with little room given for dialogue and kind-hearted disagreement. As king Solomon wisely said many centuries ago, there is truly nothing new under the sun, including me-ness.³⁶

As America turned inward and reflected on the Great War, many Christians felt a weight of guilt set in for being such propagandists during its time.³⁷ In addition to this, the European Enlightenment hit the shores of American religion hard. The two competing sides were liberals (modernists) and conservatives (fundamentalists) and both had plenty of mud to fling at one another. As the battle would be for control over church institutions, seminaries, colleges, and overall belief, the world would be watching a very public, and at times un-Christian, conflict.³⁸ Rather than seeking ways to reach across lines of denomination and tribe for the good of all, conservative “cultural Christianity” began to form. As liberal and conservative clashed, division and disagreement took place between fundamentalists as well.³⁹ Although The Church as a whole came together across denominational lines in 1966, 1971, and 1974, also forming the *World Council of Churches* (WCC), all attempting to “breathe unity” across post-Christian Europe,⁴⁰ the

³⁶ Ecclesiastes 1:9.

³⁷ Koester, LOC 4936. Dr. Koester uses the term “religious patriotism” in describing Christians’ support of the Great War. This is quite a palpable descriptor, which could be easily applied toward coaching and athletics.

³⁸ Koester, LOC 4952-4958.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, LOC 5065, 5088.

⁴⁰ Paul R. Spickard and Kevin M. Cragg, *A Global History of Christians: How Everyday Believers Experienced Their World* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2008), 380-381. As our world shifts from modern to post-modern back to pre-modern, the Church is beginning to show greater unity globally, especially in places of moderate to heavy persecution. In the West, younger generational Christians do not hold fast to denominationalism as older generations have in the past. Birth of the “Non-denominational” church and “networks” have created a sense of harmony amidst theological/doctrinal disagreements and differences. There has been and continues to be cross-denominational dialogue on cooperation for

damage of isolationism and acid of anthropocentrism within American Christianity had been done, thanks in part to the Enlightenment.⁴¹ Truly, the modern movement was centered around the idea of humanity being center and, whether through osmosis or on purpose, American Christianity wrestled with adoption and adaptation—adopting the Holy Spirit inspired pieces and adapting to the drastic cultural shifts in order to be affective.

It is no wonder Christian coaches derive most of their expertise from societal models. Part of what has spilled over into culture at large, including sport, is narrow-mindedness and anthropomorphism which many churches have succumbed to instead of resisting. Inevitably, what has taken place within athletic coaching is a mentality of a sort of player/coach business transaction: “You do this for me and I will do this for you.” Referring back to coach Stevens, if his athletes “don’t lay an egg” during games and win championships for he and the school, they have a high chance of Division I play—possibly the NFL. The tone has me-ness written all over it, and takes us further into the problem of some current coaching philosophies.

Transactional Coaching; Transfigurative Metaphor

In a recent coaching catastrophe, University of Southern California, a prestigious school both academically and athletically, experienced trouble within the athletic

worldwide evangelism, church planting, humanitarian efforts, and more. Although there are remnants of liberalism vs. conservatism among issues such as sexuality, gender identity, immigration, and so forth, followers of Jesus are faced with an opportunity to capitalize on the connectedness of our world by focusing on the mission of our King.

⁴¹ Roger E. Olson, *The Journey of Modern Theology: From Reconstruction to Deconstruction* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2013), 26.

department. The university eventually fired head football coach Steve Sarkisian for arriving to practices, press conferences, and even games, intoxicated.⁴² Making further negative headlines, head football coach of the New Orleans Saints Sean Payton, was suspended the entire 2012/13 season and defensive coordinator Greg Williams suspended indefinitely. These individuals developed and covered up a “crush-for-cash” bounty system which doled out money to defensive players for attempting to injure and/or take opposing players out of the game.⁴³ The effects of negligent coaching can also be witnessed from the athlete’s perspective. During a tightly contested professional basketball game, the Sacramento Kings’ Rudy Gay stumbled upon Toronto Raptors’ star DeMar DeRozan’s lost shoe. In an extreme demonstration of poor sportsmanship, Gay proceeded to throw the shoe into the crowd.⁴⁴ To date, no apology was submitted or disciplinary action taken by the head coach for this unpleasant behavior. Domestic violence cases, drug abuse, excusing poor behavior, covering up scandals, excessive partying, and drunk driving—it is clear something has gone haywire in athletics, and coaches across America are emulating and imitating what is shown. Our culture is primed now, more than ever, for an alternative approach to coaching.

The majority of today’s coaching methodology could fall under the category of what Joe Ehrmann, a highly revered coach and former first round NFL draft pick, refers

⁴² Gary Klein and David Wharton, "Steve Sarkisian Fired as USC's Football Coach," *Los Angeles Times*, October 12, 2015, accessed November 28, 2016, <http://www.latimes.com/sports/usc/uscnow/la-sp-sarkisian-fired-usc--coach-20151012-story.html>.

⁴³ "Saints' Payton Banned One Year for Bounties," ESPN.com, March 22, 2012, accessed November 28, 2016, http://www.espn.com/nfl/story/_/id/7718136/sean-payton-new-orleans-saints-banned-one-year-bounties.

⁴⁴ "Gay Subtly Throws DeRozan's Shoe into Crowd - ESPN Video," ESPN.com, November 20, 2016, accessed November 28, 2016, <http://www.espn.com/video/clip?id=18100864>.

to as a “Transactional Coaching” style.⁴⁵ The coach operates within a *quid pro quo* mentality, looking for what they can get out of coaching rather than what they can give, ignoring “athletes’ developmental needs and often” manipulating and distorting the values of winning and losing.⁴⁶ As eluded to in the introduction, coaches tend to emulate and imitate other coaches. The “ESPN sportscasters set an example that youth league coaches tend to follow the next day.”⁴⁷ With the tendency to replicate coaching strategies across recreational and competitive leagues, transactional approaches go virtually unnoticed and rarely challenged. In light of historical actualities, the Church is as much at fault for this *quid pro quo* approach as sacralized culture. Undoing what has been done requires a new metaphor, from transaction to transfiguration.

Ehrmann wisely asserts that coaching should be “based on a bold conviction that sports can help transform our young people...I believe that coaches have the power, platform, and position to be the linchpins in individual and social transformation—player by player, team by team, teachable moment by teachable moment.”⁴⁸ With respect, however, a transformational approach is still in danger of falling prey to transactional demons. A goal, as worthy as it sounds, to be transformed in order to make a better society and person, whispers transactionalism simply because transformation is outward by definition—one become like another. Whereas, a transfigurative metaphor is dependent on the Spirit, who works from the inside, drawing out individual’s humanity

⁴⁵ Ehrmann, 6-7.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 7.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 80.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 44.

according to Jesus—the fullest expression of what it means to be human.⁴⁹ To be fair, much good has taken place within the transformational approach to coaching, also known as “positive coaching.” The *Positive Coaching Alliance* is one example of a group resourcing coaches, administrators, parents, and players to use sport as a platform to build better people and teach life lessons over merely winning.⁵⁰ The alliance has won awards and is truly making a powerful impact in the world of athletics.⁵¹ The purpose is not to tear down this approach but highlight an alternative metaphor.

In both Matthew and Mark’s gospel accounts of Jesus’ life, there is a point where Christ leads His disciples Peter, James, and John upon a high mountain to be alone together. The narrator tells us Jesus became “*transfigured* before them, and his face shone like the sun, and his clothes became white as light.”⁵² Fast forward to Paul’s letter to the Roman Christians, in a well-known portion of Scripture he encourages the followers to “be *transformed* by the renewal of your mind...”⁵³ In both of these verses, including Second Corinthians 3:18, the Greek word used is *metamorphoō*, which literally

⁴⁹ Leonard Sweet, "Jesus Calms the Storm" (lecture, Orcas Advance, Orcas Island, Eastsound, May 31, 2017).

⁵⁰ David Bornstein, "The Power of Positive Coaching," *The New York Times*, October 20, 2011, accessed March 3, 2018, <https://opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/2011/10/20/the-power-of-positive-coaching/>.

⁵¹ "PCA's Mission & History," accessed March 3, 2018, <https://www.positivecoach.org/mission-history/>.

⁵² Matthew 17:2 & Mark 9:2. Emphasis mine.

⁵³ Romans 12:2. Emphasis mine.

means to take upon a different physical form or appearance;⁵⁴ “to remodel.”⁵⁵ The translation into words such as “transform” and “transformation” betrays the symbolism early writers were attempting to animate. The translation in Romans and others are not necessarily wrong descriptors of *metamorphoō*, simply not the most captivating of the Greek language. A more robust use of the term should be “morph” or “transfigure.” The Middle English *forme* means to “mold, model, or sort.”⁵⁶ Transformation carries with it a lateral movement—change from one form over to the next such as what was found in colonialism—which is outside-in. Transfiguration, however, begins and ends with person or object, which is inside-out. The Middle English term *figūra*, means “shape” and implies everything that exists or will be, is already available from within.⁵⁷ This is why we confidently claim Jesus shows us what we are meant to humanly become and as Christ lives *within* us, “the more we release and unleash His presence in us.”⁵⁸ The *transfigure* metaphor translates into the world of sports. The Christian coach is not simply looking to push their athletes from one form to the next, but to pull out what is already within the God-given disposition of individuals.

⁵⁴ Johannes P. Louw and Eugene A. Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament, Based on Semantic Domains*, electronic ed. of the 2nd edition, vol. 1 (New York, NY: United Bible Societies, 1989), 586.

⁵⁵ Gerhard Kittel, Gerhard Friedrich, and Geoffrey W. Bromiley, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, electronic ed. vol. 4 (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964), 755.

⁵⁶ Dictionary.com, s.v. “form,” accessed September 3, 2017, <http://www.dictionary.com/browse/form>.

⁵⁷ Dictionary.com, s.v. “figure,” accessed September 3, 2017, <http://www.dictionary.com/browse/figure>.

⁵⁸ Leonard I. Sweet, “Memes” (lecture, DMIN Advance #2, Jupiter Hotel, Portland, June 20, 2016).

The metaphor we can easily turn to is a caterpillar becoming a beautiful butterfly—it is the same insect taking on a completely different shape. Jesus is no less Jesus when He transfigures into a completely different figure. When the Apostle Paul explains to his readers they should be “*metamorphoō* by the renewal of” their minds, he is purposely capturing and reminding us of the magnificent scene we read about with Jesus and His disciples. When it comes to the Christian coach, words and metaphor matters; metaphor is power.⁵⁹ Transfiguration takes place when a coach points out the best in an athlete, no matter their skill level, no matter how short or long they perform at that level. Unfortunately, coaches can get the metaphor wrong and bogged down into a transactional mindset, simply because it dominates our culture.

Despite how well intentioned many coaches are, a major problem found within current coaching lies in the tendency to disregard the pitfalls of toxic cultural standards by utilizing influence to incentivize players for better performance in their sport. Kentucky basketball coach John Calapari’s motto at UMASS was “Refuse to Lose.”⁶⁰ Bill Walsh prided himself on perfection in all areas, which, by definition, leaves no room for improvement and growth.⁶¹ Vince Lombardi is famously quoted as saying, “Winning isn’t everything, it’s the only thing.”⁶² The great Duke basketball coach Mike Krzyzewski

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ John Calipari and Michael Sokolove, *Players First: Coaching from the Inside Out* (New York, NY: Penguin Press, 2014), 39.

⁶¹ Bill Walsh, Steve Jamison, and Craig Walsh, *The Score Takes Care of Itself: My Philosophy of Leadership* (New York, NY: Portfolio, 2009), 17-18.

⁶² Calapari, 39.

emphasizes personal excellence and a desire for his “...team to get better every day.”⁶³ In addition, legend Phil Jackson builds a case that love is the most essential ingredient for winning and success in sport.⁶⁴ Ohio State Football coach Urban Meyer talks about an “Above the Line Behavior” for the purpose of achieving success on the football field.⁶⁵ H. A. Dorfman persuades, “The coach who can convey fundamentally sound philosophy through an appropriate style wins the day. And the players. And, it’s hoped, many games.”⁶⁶ Not all of current coaching philosophy is negative; however, much of this type of coaching builds its foundation upon performance rather than life transfiguration. Ehrmann, as well as others, have found pitfalls with popular coaching methods and would agree with the Trappist monk Thomas Merton. Merton claims all men are in search of meaning and significance; this is *the* central part of life.⁶⁷ Therefore, athletics should be viewed as a means to finding who Jesus crafted us to be; the coach is a powerful instrument in the hands of the Spirit to nudge, shape, and prod toward becoming truly human. Too often people view sports as the end instead of the means, and the coach, intentionally or ignorantly, can use their platform for personal gain. However, we must get the metaphor right in order to remedy this problem.

⁶³ Mike Krzyzewski and Donald T. Phillips, *Leading with the Heart: Coach K's Successful Strategies for Basketball, Business, and Life* (New York, NY: Warner Books, 2000), 53-54.

⁶⁴ Phil Jackson and Hugh Delehanty, *Eleven Rings: The Soul of Success* (New York, NY: Penguin Press, 2013), 3-10.

⁶⁵ Urban Meyer and Wayne R. Coffey, *Above the Line: Lessons in Leadership and Life from a Championship Season* (New York, NY: Penguin Press, 2015), 5.

⁶⁶ H. A. Dorfman, *Coaching the Mental Game: Leadership Philosophies and Strategies for Peak Performance in Sports, and Everyday Life* (Lanham, MD: Taylor Trade Pub., 2003), 20.

⁶⁷ Thomas Merton, *No Man Is an Island* (New York, NY: Harcourt, Brace, 1955), xi-xiii.

Among the toxic cultural standards and contributing to a transactional metaphor, are four major coaching philosophies. First, the *Dictator-Coach*, embodies the mentality “my way or the highway.” The greatly beloved and respected former football coach Bill Walsh of the San Francisco 49ers paints a difficult picture for us: “I was never a screamer, but everyone knew not to buck me when I’d decided what we were going to do. Just like Mike Holmgren, Tom Landry, Jimmy Johnson, and many others, I was unswerving in moving toward *my* goal. Once I have accumulated and evaluated the available information, *I did it my way*. And so should you (emphasis mine).”⁶⁸ A gentler descriptor of this philosophy can be called the “Command Style” of coaching,⁶⁹ which has little to no room for a “players first” mentality.⁷⁰

Often labeled a tyrant, the dictator notoriously creates an environment of fear, panic, and intimidation.⁷¹ The main transaction found in this coaching philosophy tells players how to think and behave, in order to achieve the goals, success, and “Standards of Performance,”⁷² as defined by the coach. Football legends Paul William “Bear” Bryant and Vince Lombardi are prime examples of coaches who embodied this philosophy. “Coaches can either break young people’s psyches or build their souls.”⁷³ The Dictator-Coach accomplishes the former.

⁶⁸ Walsh, 79.

⁶⁹ Rainer Martens, *Successful Coaching* (Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics, 1997), 11.

⁷⁰ Calapari, 10, 40.

⁷¹ Walsh, 77.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 17.

⁷³ Ehrmann, 74.

The second coaching style is the *Bully-Coach*. This is a straightforward descriptor, readily understood simply because of the bullying phenomenon amongst children and adolescents within American culture. A bully is manipulative, often irate, and in some cases verbally abusive. This coaching philosophy takes advantage of an athlete's weaknesses and vulnerabilities in order to gain leverage to achieve a desired goal or outcome. The Bully-Coach views their athletes as a means to an end, forfeiting opportunities to speak to the soul of an athlete. Coach Krzyzewski has a great attitude, which challenges the bully: "...Coaching basketball is still my vehicle for relationships and friendships. In fact, coaching basketball is my vehicle for life itself—for the larger journey...At the end of every season, I don't think so much about the number of games we won or how far we got on the road to the national championship. Rather, I think about all the kids on the team and what we lived through together that year."⁷⁴

The Bully-Coach is nearsighted, ignoring their internal brokenness and lacks the awareness of what triggers them. "A trigger can be a thought, feeling, or situation that taps into an old injury or insult, igniting overwhelming feelings of anger, shame, or anxiety. Triggering can lead to distorted reactions and uncontrolled outbursts of anger, rage, and abusiveness and an assortment of reactive behaviors. Not to mention tons of regret."⁷⁵ It is important to note bullying is not unique to the secular arena. The Christian coach is just as susceptible to negative coaching philosophies and must be aware of his/her triggers lest they fall into a philosophy of bullying to get what they desire. Most,

⁷⁴ Krzyzewski, 273.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 87.

if not all, of the Bully-Coach's actions come from a dehumanizing posture and thus, is dangerous.

The third strategy resides in the *Pushover-Coach*. This philosophy takes on the visual of a babysitter, with the tendency to take more of a "Business as Usual" mentality.⁷⁶ This mind state can consequently morph into neglect and irresponsibility.⁷⁷ Another title for this philosophy is, "The nice-guy/girl Coach."⁷⁸ This type of coach fears being viewed as Attila the Hun and subsequently assumes the role of Mr. Rodgers or Martha Stewart.⁷⁹ In addition, a Pushover-Coach embodies the belief it is their responsibility to be everyone's friend, attempting to make her athletes happy while lacking the ability to challenge poor behavior and have control over her locker room. In other words, this coach excessively empathizes with players at the expense of healthy boundaries.⁸⁰

The transaction with the Pushover-Coach is much more subtle than the others. They seek validation via their athletes accepting and "liking" them.⁸¹ Nice-guys tend to be people-pleasers with low self-esteem.⁸² University of Nebraska head football coach Mike Riley, although greatly loved by his players, tends to personify this philosophy. A fictional visual of a pushover can be found in the movie *The Waterboy* starring Adam

⁷⁶ Walsh, 30.

⁷⁷ Martens, 12.

⁷⁸ Dorfman, 175.

⁷⁹ Ibid., 177.

⁸⁰ Ehrmann, 83.

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² Ibid., 176.

Sandler. In the now classic flick, college football head coach—played by actor Henry Winkler—Coach Klein struggles to gain any sort of respect from fans, players, and the broader college football world.⁸³ He/She shy's away from conflict, is indecisive, and constantly overrun by others. An insecure coach such as this, can create an environment of unease, uncertainty, and vulnerability.

In a sports market filled with big egos, pride, and arrogance, the final coaching philosophy of the *Narcissist-Coach* is widely evident. A coach that operates as *prima donna*, ensures the team's mission centers around their reputation which becomes a vain attempt to make themselves look good. This philosophy cases a multitude of trouble. The narcissist craves the spotlight and the focus of the team turns to one individual. Similar to the Greek god Narcissus who fell in love with his reflection, the team becomes a personal mirror reflecting a coach's self-worth and goals. By definition, the Narcissist-Coach is psychologically obsessed with himself/herself, causing significant trust issues at the core of their team.⁸⁴

Within this philosophy, sportsmanship tends to fly out the window. It seems like the majority of times, a Narcissist-Coach will choose to run up the score over backing down. They have difficulty taking responsibility for failure, often resorting to the blame game. It is common to witness complaining, frequently throwing athletes and staff under the bus in order to save face publicly. Prime examples of this philosophy are former Buffalo Bills football coach Rex Ryan, in his earlier coaching years, and former

⁸³ "The Waterboy (1998)," IMDb, accessed September 16, 2017, http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0120484/?ref_=nv_sr_1.

⁸⁴ Dictionary.com, s.v. "narcissist," accessed December 16, 2016, <http://www.dictionary.com/browse/narcissist>.

Argentine superstar and national soccer (football) manager Diego Maradona. A Narcissist-Coach can suck out any enjoyment in playing for the love of the game⁸⁵ while inhibiting imagination, cognitive, physical, social, and emotional development.⁸⁶

An even more dangerous piece to this approach are the subtle and manipulative ways in which coaches use their team and/or individuals to validate themselves and stroke their own egos. Like humans in general, a Narcissist-Coach finds his/her validation and value in team performance, achieving certain goals, being feared and “respected” by individuals, being in control, having power, and a host of other things. Furthermore, a narcissist may find ways to cloak his/her personal agenda in team language, creating toxic environments directly or indirectly. With this description in mind, the Narcissist-Coach can be the most dangerous of all approaches discussed and should be avoided at any cost.

Summary

The problem within sport, and coaching as a whole, is obvious and disturbing. In the Summer of 2017, high school cheerleading coach Ozell Williams was fired for holding onto several cheerleaders and pushing them into the splits position during practice.⁸⁷ Recently, superstar running back Ezekiel Elliott was suspended by the NFL for

⁸⁵ Krzyzewski, 273; Ehrmann, 90.

⁸⁶ K. R. Ginsburg, "The Importance of Play in Promoting Healthy Child Development and Maintaining Strong Parent-Child Bonds," *Pediatrics* 119, no. 1 (2007): 182-184, doi:10.1542/peds.2006-2697.

⁸⁷ Amy Held, "Denver High School Cheerleading Coach Fired After Videos Show 'Forced Splits,'" NPR, August 26, 2017, accessed September 3, 2017, <http://www.npr.org/sections/thetwo-way/2017/08/26/546368547/denver-high-school-cheerleading-coach-fired-after-videos-show-forced-splits>.

six games due to a year long investigation into domestic-abuse charges brought by his ex-girlfriend.⁸⁸ In the middle of the arbitration hearing, it was reported Elliott admitted to heavy drug use and drinking during his college years at Ohio State, yet never failed a drug test.⁸⁹ Currently, there appears to be a “rules do not apply” mentality within the athletic realm. We have bought into the dangerous adage “what happens here, stays here,” which continues to trickle down into college basketball, youth soccer leagues, kids’ t-ball, and the like. We are privy to Pop Warner coaches who throw temper-tantrums at a blown call, Little League coaches threatening seventeen year old umpires,⁹⁰ and many other outlandish examples of boorish behavior in youth coaching. Obviously there are many stories of coaches who are encouraging, inspiring, and ethical leaders, attempting to make a difference. The problem remains, with more and more stories of the former coming out, there is room for an alternative approach. It is imperative that followers of Jesus challenge coaching philosophies mainly peddled by individuals or society at large.

The problem of transactional coaching is nothing new and religion in America has done her fair share to contribute. Cross-denominational fighting, schisms, colonialism, Catholic versus Protestant, territorialism, public slander over disagreements, violence

⁸⁸ Will Brinson, "Why Ezekiel Elliott Could Still Start Week 1, Where to Draft Him in Fantasy," CBSSports.com, September 3, 2017, accessed September 3, 2017, <https://www.cbssports.com/nfl/news/why-ezekiel-elliott-could-still-start-week-1-where-to-draft-him-in-fantasy/>. Even though he continues to be under scrutiny and investigation, Elliott has yet to miss a game this season.

⁸⁹ John Breech, "Ezekiel Elliott Testifies under Oath that He Liked to Do Drugs at Ohio State," CBSSports.com, September 3, 2017, accessed September 3, 2017, <https://www.cbssports.com/nfl/news/ezekiel-elliott-testifies-under-oath-that-he-liked-to-do-drugs-at-ohio-state/>.

⁹⁰ This is a real scenario that occurred during one of my little league games. I was ten years old.

toward one another, and slavery have all spilled over into and parallel what is happening in society at large. The “me-ness” disease found within America has part of its roots in the insider, inwardly-focused, self-centered acts, and consumeristic approach of the historical Western Church. Followers of Jesus are not solely to blame, but have failed in part to accurately re-present Jesus in a way that entices one another toward neighborliness rather than me-ness. Sport and coaching is only one example of a pandemic issue.

Since the beginning of sport, coach and athlete alike have been prone to selfishness and corruption, yet fan bases continue to increase alongside spending; salaries continue to increase as morality seems to decrease. In 2015, long time FIFA President Sepp Blatter was removed from office and banned for eight years after an onslaught “of corruption allegations.”⁹¹ When we have some of the most powerful men and women in sport conducting themselves unethically, why are we surprised a high school cheer coach crosses the line ethically with a thirteen-year old girl? Why do we shake our heads in disgust at the off-field antics of many athletes such as Ezekiel Elliott? Indeed, there is something very wrong taking place and coaching can be a solution or contributor to the problem. In Section II, we will explore some of the current approaches or methods coaches are and have used. We will discover most of these approaches spawn from a transactional or transformational metaphor, however, there are several positives within current alternative solutions.

⁹¹ "Sepp Blatter: End of Era for Fifa Boss," BBC News, December 21, 2015, accessed September 3, 2017, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-32985553>.

SECTION II: ALTERNATIVE SOLUTIONS

Introduction

It is imperative we do not leave Section I feeling as if the American Church has only damaged athletics and culture as a whole, but recognize the historical role Western versions of Christianity have played in the problem of coaching philosophy and methods. Indeed, much good has taken place due to athletes' generosity and platform, in which followers of Jesus have led the way. According to several sources, faith-based organizations make up the bulk of disaster recovery efforts and Christians are among the most generous with more than just their money.⁹² In response to both hurricane Harvey and Irma, Paul Singer of *USA Today* writes: "In a disaster, churches don't just hold bake sales to raise money or collect clothes to send to victims; faith-based organizations are integral partners in state and federal disaster relief efforts."⁹³ Gobbling up his fair share of the social media world, defensive end for the Houston Texans J. J. Watt has raised some 30 million dollars via social media, through his organization "Justin J. Watt Foundation," for Hurricane Harvey Relief.⁹⁴ Without a doubt, Watt's family and friends

⁹² Paul Singer, "Faith Groups Provide the Bulk of Disaster Recovery, in Coordination with FEMA," *USA Today*, September 13, 2017, accessed September 16, 2017, https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/politics/2017/09/10/hurricane-irma-faith-groups-provide-bulk-disaster-recovery-coordination-fema/651007001/?utm_source=Colson%2BCenter%2BMaster%2BList&utm_campaign=b48b654fbd-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2017_06_16&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_84bd2dc76d-b48b654fbd-8952877.

⁹³ *Ibid.*

⁹⁴ Aaron Wilson, "J.J. Watt Hurricane Relief Fund Hits \$30 Million," *Houston Chronicle*, September 8, 2017, accessed September 9, 2017, <http://www.chron.com/sports/texans/article/J-J-Watt-hurricane-relief-fund-hits-30-million-12184715.php>.

played a role in the shaping of his character, including some of his coaches throughout the years. However, the body of Christ has set an unprecedented example worth following during these types of philanthropic endeavors.⁹⁵

Coaches, athletes, and organizations are not limited to monetary generosity. Although transactional in his approach, Olympic gold medalist Aly Raisman views her coach Mihai Brestyan as a huge encourager and someone she goes to whenever facing personal issues.⁹⁶ In regard to Christian coaches, one athlete expressed their gratefulness to have played for someone who was patient and emphasized team bonding.⁹⁷ Another told of their coach's passion, ability to lose well, positive interaction, and focus on the heart of a player rather than merely the "W."⁹⁸ High school football coach Rob Shader cites his core philosophy revolves around love: "Love the sport. Love the referees. Love the other people playing. Love the team."⁹⁹ Coach Benedict shared how one of his desires is to make sure when every athlete leaves his program, they had a positive experience which equipped them for their future.¹⁰⁰

Through personal interviews and research, it is clear many coaches truly care for their athletes and view themselves as playing an intricate part in the human development

⁹⁵ Although Watt has not professed faith in Jesus, his example is one worth noting and learning from.

⁹⁶ Meredith Vieira, "Olympic Gold Medalist Aly Raisman Praises Coach Mihai Brestyan For Pep Talk Motivation (OVERSHARE)," YouTube, November 18, 2013, accessed September 9, 2017, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MmH501xaR8U>.

⁹⁷ Kali Bravo, "Christian Coaching Philosophy: An Athlete's Perspective," interview by author, September 16, 2017.

⁹⁸ Megan Benedict, "Christian Coaching Philosophy: An Athlete's Perspective," interview by author, September 23, 2017.

⁹⁹ Rob Shader, "Christian Coaching Philosophy," interview by author, October 3, 2016.

¹⁰⁰ Megan Benedict.

of these individuals. Coaches are esteemed as role models, mother/father figures, mentors, confidants, and influential long after the athlete's playing days. Although much of the unethical feats dominate the press, much good has and continues to take place in sport due to caring coaches. Whether a facet or in its totality, many are aware of the problem and work hard at correcting it through their own coaching philosophy. With regard to this truth, alternative approaches to the problematic transactional coaching philosophies are about as many as there are coaches, with a plethora of variances. The goal of section II will be to funnel down the plurality of current day solutions into a select general few.

The Mentor-Coach Approach: Relationship Over Results

Not every coach in athletics believes yelling, cussing, and leading with an iron fist is a necessary evil to sport competition. On the other side of the coin, not every coach who exercises meekness, calmness, and an overall gentle disposition, is the "pushover" coach touched on toward the end of section I. Amidst the different approaches to coaching athletes, a Christian coach can possess many different types of traits which have little to do with their approach to coaching.¹⁰¹ For instance, a loud and gregarious individual can be *laissez faire* in his or her coaching style and a quiet individual an authoritarian. To be sure, traits have bearing on approach, but all too often they are confused as the same thing. For the first alternative philosophy, the mentor-coach values relationship above all else. Both the loud and quiet, extrovert and introvert, serious and playful, can be found within this approach. Whereas many transactional approaches are

¹⁰¹ Dan Gordon, *Coaching Science* (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, 2009), 15-17.

first and foremost oriented toward winning at the expense of losing the relationship with an athlete, the mentor-coach flips the script. A primary goal and purpose is always to win the person first. In winning the individual, you inevitably win over the hearts, respect, and play of athletes, which can lead to winning games.

Coach Erik Ihde is such an individual. When you first interact with this girls varsity soccer coach, it is apparent why he is loved beyond equal. Whimsical and witty, coach utilizes his personality to win over athletes with authenticity and lacks a sort of superciliousness which tends to creep its way in high school varsity sports. When interviewing a former athlete of his, one of the most appreciated piece of coach Ihde's philosophy has to do with an emphasis on team-bonding. "It wasn't just about playing soccer together. It was all about knowing the person you are playing with."¹⁰² For instance, each year when the varsity squad is announced initiation takes place, culminating with a pitched tent in coach's front yard and a huge breakfast the next morning around the table.¹⁰³ For this seasoned coach, X's and O's are not the number one consideration in terms of getting the best out of athletes, however, journeying with his athletes equals success on and off the soccer pitch.¹⁰⁴

In the opening paragraphs of his first book *Quiet Strength*, Tony Dungy sets up its trajectory and his philosophy by stating football, coaching, and life as a whole, is a journey: "it is all about the journey—mine and yours—and the lives we can touch, the

¹⁰² Kali Bravo.

¹⁰³ This "initiation" is *not* equivalent to "hazing," but is much more light-hearted. For Ihde's girls, it includes challenges such as eating a bug or drinking some unappetizing concoction.

¹⁰⁴ Erik Ihde, "Christian Coaching Philosophy," interview by author, September 23, 2017.

legacy we can leave, and the world we can change for the better.”¹⁰⁵ The Super Bowl winning coach sees football and his platform as a means to do more than merely win on Sundays, but centered upon people—journeying with them and sharing what true success looks like.¹⁰⁶ It is safe to say Dungy was and is one of the most widely respected coaches in all of professional sports and is a great example of the mentor-coach approach.

Elsewhere, he charts out a series of traits, leadership attributes, and relational qualities every mentor-coach should possess—one of which—is the importance of being available and approachable.¹⁰⁷ A mentor approach to athletics expects the coach to make space for teaching, interaction, and demonstrating care for those on the team. Once again, Coach Ihde lives out this philosophy: “If a kid does not know you care, they won’t listen to your instructions and criticisms. Every critique or challenge has been prefaced with three or four statements on how valuable they are to me and the team.”¹⁰⁸

This intentionality inevitably adds value to the individual and builds trust between player and coach and teammates. Dungy shifts the typical transactional paradigm by defining a mentor leader as one who asks how each decision can benefit others and the team as a whole. When applied specifically to a coach, goals and expectations are adjusted according to each athlete’s skills, role, personality, background, etc. In other

¹⁰⁵ Tony Dungy and Nathan Whitaker, *Quiet Strength: A Memoir* (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 2007), xiv-xv.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, xvi.

¹⁰⁷ Tony Dungy and Nathan Whitaker, *The Mentor Leader* (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 2010), 89. Coach Dungy uses the term “leader,” applying his principles to all aspects of life. Much of his content is geared toward athletics, therefore, I drop “leader” and add “coach” for the purposes of my research.

¹⁰⁸ Erik Ihde.

words, each player is coached as an individual part of a larger organism. General desired outcomes are expressed for the entire team, with each individual playing a specific part in achieving whatever “success” looks like. The mentor coach focusses on investing in people, not necessarily on-field results, helping the athletes they lead get to where they are going, *together*.¹⁰⁹ This concept is especially crucial when it comes to those coaching within youth sports. Youth sport psychologists Ronald Smith and Frank Smoll, coin this priority a “Mastery Approach to Coaching,” which utilizes relationships to motivate athletes toward mastering their sport and motivating them to perform at their best ability.¹¹⁰ The authors claim by implementing and emphasizing a developmental model, the inevitable result becomes quality experience, team cohesion, an increase in fun and self-esteem, and much more.¹¹¹ In other words, a mentor coach recognizes the priority of personal growth over wins and losses. To sum up the mentor style, this particular coach is marked by a lateral approach to leadership rather than top-down, communal instead of dictatorial, and investing into versus getting out of players. This concept of coaching will get unpacked more in section III, with an emphasis on the Holy Spirit working through *apprenticing*. If the mentor-coach philosophy focuses on building into for the long haul, a moral approach to coaching emphasizes what the game pulls out of individual athletes.

¹⁰⁹ Dungy, *The Mentor Leader*, 22.

¹¹⁰ Ronald Edward Smith and Frank L. Smoll, *Sport Psychology for Youth Coaches: Developing Champions in Sports and Life* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2012), 29.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, 13.

The Moral Approach: Ethics Over Ethos

In his book *Sport, Philosophy, and Good Lives*, Randolph Feezell makes short order of former Ohio State football coach Jim Tressel. In a chapter specifically designed to shred Tressel's approach to coaching, taking issue with any philosophy focusing on educating athletes for life not merely winning in their desired sport. "Tressel's book is motivated by the pretentious desire to impart 'wisdom,' yet its methods are inappropriate to such context, and his knowledge of the tradition and complexities of ethical reflection is absurdly incongruent with his desires."¹¹² Though harsh toward a well respected Christian coach, Feezell bases his critique on a belief that ethical behavior and morality will arise out of or from within athletes as they participate in sport, not via "ethical instruction" from the coined "coach as sage."¹¹³ In other words, sport itself gives opportunity for virtue to emerge as individuals engage in actions which promote certain virtues and to push your own system of belief and principles upon a team is, in and of itself, unethical.¹¹⁴ Although I appreciate Feezell's assessment, he is a little unfair toward coach Tressel in that every coach, no matter the religious/non-religious background, is pushing and peddling certain values and principles based off his/her own worldview. Nevertheless, one of the reasons a moral approach is so powerful and popular, has to do with a plague of cheating which has spread throughout American (and world) sport

¹¹² Randolph M. Feezell, *Sport, Philosophy, and Good Lives* (University of Nebraska Press, 2013), 171.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, 158-159.

¹¹⁴ Feezell pulls a great amount from the likes of Aristotle and Socrates when dealing with sport and ethics. In this case, he borrows Aristotle's belief "that moral virtues arise from habitation, not instruction," 181. For Feezell and others, morality stands a better chance of being caught, not taught.

history. In his forward to the book *Crooked: A History of Cheating in Sports*, Maury Allen makes a whimsically accurate statement: “Cheating is probably as much a part of American sports today as hot dogs, soda pop, or beer. It is the idea of the competition, and the element of success that matters.”¹¹⁵ Elsewhere, Feezell states matter-of-factly the responsibility every coach owns, to teach and model a disdain for cheating regardless its popularity.¹¹⁶ Because there is ample opportunity to pull out virtue from within sport participation, the opposite will rear its ugly head as well. This is where a primary moral philosophy seeks to derail unethical appetites.

According to many researchers, the connection between ethical cultivation and sport dates back to no later than Plato.¹¹⁷ Historically, athletics has been used as a means to build character and instill a set of values within all who participate. Within the moral framework, a coach is responsible to model certain values and behaviors consistent with those he or she desires players to emulate and recognizes one has tremendous influence on his or her athlete’s behavior, both individual and communal.¹¹⁸ Success is partially defined by players exhibiting certain ethical behavior, for the betterment of an individual, the team, and society as a whole. Coach Joanne McCollie would agree and fit into this

¹¹⁵ Fran Zimniuch, *Crooked: A History of Cheating in Sports* (Lanham, MD: Taylor Trade Pub., 2009), xi.

¹¹⁶ Randolph M. Feezell, *Sport, Play, and Ethical Reflection* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2004), 98.

¹¹⁷ M. J. McNamee and S.J Parry, *Ethics and Sport* (London, UK: E & FN Spon, 1998), 119.

¹¹⁸ Carol L. Alberts, *Coaching Issues & Dilemmas: Character Building Through Sport Participation* (Oxon Hill, MD: AAHPERD, 2003), 34.

coaching philosophy, teaching her athletes to make choices with “great care.”¹¹⁹ Her philosophical mantra is “Choice, not chance, determines destiny. Become a champion in *life*,” with the goal of helping every player in her sphere of influence understand they are a product of their choices; they are in control.¹²⁰ The legendary John Wooden places integrity near the top of his “pyramid of success,” claiming that our intentions are truly a reflection of our hearts. For coach Wooden a person is not “successful” because they perform well at a sport, but success comes when individuals have “purity of intention...we are not going to do anything that will be demeaning to anybody else, either on or off the court...we will never consider letting our teammates down.”¹²¹ The moral approach, therefore, finds coaches influencing athletes based off of holding the team accountable to the values which arise from within sport participation (i.e. sportsmanship, courage, perseverance, respect, hard work, integrity, etc.), which inevitably carry on throughout life outside of sports.¹²² Once again, Smith and Smoll tack on to this concept by emphasizing a coach’s role within youth sports. The authors’ twist on the moral approach is once again in regard to psychology, focusing on principles which guide behaviors.¹²³ If ethics and virtue are anything, they are dealing with behavior. They proclaim that a quality experience while participating in a sport can be educational,

¹¹⁹ Joanne P. McCallie, *Choice Not Chance: Rules for Building a Fierce Competitor* (Hoboken, NJ: Wiley, 2012), 18-19.

¹²⁰ Ibid.

¹²¹ John Wooden and Jay Carty, *Coach Wooden's Pyramid of Success* (Ventura, CA: Regal, 2005), 118-19.

¹²² Feezell, *Sport, Philosophy, and Good Lives*, 181-182.

¹²³ Smith and Smoll, 21.

helping develop personal character and ethical maturation which will serve them later in life.¹²⁴

Both David Younger, head varsity football coach of a nearby high school, and coach Matt Bane expressed their hope and desire to help young boys build character, utilizing the sport of football to develop characteristics for the long haul.¹²⁵ Jerry Barawis, a high school junior varsity girls volleyball coach, is convinced a positive aspect of sport is the development of character traits and teaching of life skills which naturally ooze from participating. High School track and field coach Josh Dykes, takes a page out of Alberts' book by stressing the importance of modeling for the team what he and his staff deem as morally important.¹²⁶ He goes on to say that sport, by design, offers athletes opportunities to work out desirable character traits through adversity, working through feelings, roles they will play on the team, and more.¹²⁷ Most coaches and athletes interviewed find learning values and ethics via competition, sportsmanship, and the like as inevitable. It is safe to conclude participation in a sport affords great opportunity to develop virtue and, what Feezell calls "internal goods."¹²⁸ Therefore, a moral approach focusses mainly on drawing out character traits, life lessons, skills, and values—making

¹²⁴ Ibid., 13-14.

¹²⁵ David Younger, "Christian Coaching Philosophy," telephone interview by author, September 18, 2017; Bane.

¹²⁶ Josh Dykes, "Christian Coaching Philosophy," telephone interview by author, January 21, 2017.

¹²⁷ Ibid.

¹²⁸ Feezell, *Sport, Play, and Ethical Reflection*, 127-129.

people moral— whereas a *Look Within Approach* sees them as a byproduct of focusing on the spiritual nature of athletes/athletics.

The Look Within Approach: Spiritual Over Surface¹²⁹

Phil Jackson, one of the most successful NBA coaches of all time, is well known for merging spirituality with sport. A self-proclaimed syncretist with a great affinity for Buddhism,¹³⁰ Jackson does not separate his “personal beliefs” from his “professional life”¹³¹ and has earned the nickname “Zen Master.”¹³² Every training camp, he would ask his “players to form a circle in the center of the court on the first day...[for a designed]...program of daily meditation practice for players, slowly increasing the time spent in each session from three to ten minutes.”¹³³ Phil Jackson brilliantly merged spirituality and personal worldview into the sport. There was no compartmentalization for the “Zen Master;” sports are seen, accurately, as spiritual.¹³⁴

A look within coach views athletics as more than concrete, physical, and surface in nature; there is something deeper to sport than merely ethics, relationships, and

¹²⁹ I acknowledge a “mystic” approach is not overtly Christian and do not advocate for Eastern philosophy. I deem, however, the importance of taking a look at the mystical angle of sport since spirituality occupies a large space within athletics worldwide.

¹³⁰ Phil Jackson and Hugh Delehanty, *Sacred Hoops: Spiritual Lessons of a Hardwood Warrior* (New York, NY: Hyperion, 1995), 3-5, 32, 46-52.

¹³¹ Phil Jackson and Hugh Delehanty, *Eleven Rings: The Soul of Success* (New York, NY: Penguin Press, 2013), 12.

¹³² Wikipedia contributors, "Phil Jackson," *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia*, accessed November 17, 2016, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Phil_Jackson&oldid=749948577, 1.

¹³³ Jackson and Delehanty, *Eleven Rings*, 209-210.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, 3, 9-10.

winning. Coach Barawis, middle school girls' volleyball coach, truly believes God has created him for coaching and has been doing it for twenty years as a volunteer. Without hesitating, he expressed a belief in the miraculous on and off the volleyball court.¹³⁵ Truly, for a coach with this approach, there is something spiritual about athletics and they conduct themselves in such a way. Breathing exercises, visualization, focus, positive thinking/talk, and the like, all encompass this philosophy. Author and consultant Jerry Lynch emphasizes the importance of tapping into the spirituality of coaching and searching within one's self for a higher purpose: "Athletes are spiritual in nature, have bodies, minds, hearts, and aspirations. We are all spiritual beings having an athletic experience, as opposed to athletes and coaches having a spiritual experience."¹³⁶ Lynch's whole approach to coaching revolves around balancing two dimensions, which he calls a "path of heart," in order to be successful: teaching skill-sets and wisdom of inspiration that will empower athletes.¹³⁷

There is something intangible about the "dance" between the physical, or "X's" and "O's" of sport, and spiritual of coaching. For the mystic, the two interchange and coaches would benefit from not ignoring this spiritual facet of athletics. Lynch goes on to claim that the spirituality within coaching acts as a guide to leadership and "becomes a conduit for inner growth," helping each athlete experience something beyond the ordinary.¹³⁸ With the look within approach, it begins with an understanding of self and

¹³⁵ Jerry Barawis, "Christian Coaching Philosophy," interview by author, September 16, 2017.

¹³⁶ Jerry Lynch and Chungliang Al Huang, *Coaching with Heart: Taoist Wisdom to Inspire, Empower, and Lead in Sports & Life* (North Clarendon, VT: Tuttle Pub., 2013), 25-26.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, 12.

¹³⁸ Lynch, 27.

helping athletes connect with their inner strength, taking them further than they thought possible. Though there is something ambiguous about this approach, many coaches have peppered their teams with the talk of “digging deep” and “looking within.” Former Ohio State football coach Jim Tressel, a Christian, takes a page out of coach John Wooden’s book by defining success as “inner satisfaction” and “peace of mind.”¹³⁹ Tressel goes on to say he and his staff help their athletes “understand that success is being the best they can be, and feeling good about that...,” separating value as a person from what is achieved. The tag-line “be the best version of yourself” or “be the change you want to see” typifies a look within approach.¹⁴⁰ Once again, Lynch gives insight through an analogy of the ripple effect which takes place by dropping a pebble into water: “So it is with coaching... Who you are and what you do comes from your center, your essence, and as you talk, guide, mentor, and teach, your words and behavior ripple outward impacting and influencing all within your world.”¹⁴¹

At the foundation of this approach is the individual; a look within, in order to help others achieve peak performance. Although it tends to derive from a more Eastern way of thinking, coaches from all backgrounds buy into this philosophy fully or at a partial level. Several coaches interviewed corroborated the importance of helping their athletes grow personally. One coach talked about keeping a mindset of “we play ourselves every week,” which takes the focus off of winning and onto the betterment of an

¹³⁹ Jim Tressel and Chris Fabry, *The Winners Manual: For the Game of Life* (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Pub., 2009), 4-5.

¹⁴⁰ Lynch, 41.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 40-41.

individual/team.¹⁴² As with coach Phil Jackson, the “look within” coach emphasizes meditation before and/or after practice and games, prioritizing the calming of the mind and inner self through focus. I am pointing out the type of meditation done by Eastern religions, which rely on breathing techniques and “helps us to find balance and keep it in our lives. It is a source of positive energy and keeps us connected to our purpose as coaches.”¹⁴³ Though followers of Jesus are encouraged to meditate, this is a different form and focus than what the Scriptures are representing. Even so, there is something biblical about the viewing of sport through a spiritual lens and not the other way around.¹⁴⁴

Summary

Some Christians have, for many different reasons, removed the Holy Spirit from the arena of sports, and other belief stories have gladly filled the vacancy. According to the research of Amos Yong, the merging of sport and Christianity is a relatively recent development.¹⁴⁵ This development came after many years of sports being viewed as devil’s playground inside some Christian circles.¹⁴⁶ It is only within the last several decades a perceptible shift toward evangelism within sports can be witnessed. However,

¹⁴² Younger.

¹⁴³ Lynch, 54.

¹⁴⁴ For a more practical way to apply this spiritual approach from a biblical perspective, see Section V: Artifact.

¹⁴⁵ Amos Yong, "Running the (Special) Race: New (Pauline) Perspectives on Disability and Theology of Sport," *Journal of Disability & Religion* 18, no. 2 (2014).

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 211.

the tendency (alongside of a Western culture) still remains, to make winning and athletics our god.¹⁴⁷ Followers of Jesus can fall into the same trappings of idolatry, creating sparse separation from non-Christian coaches, parents, and fans. This lack of distinction in coaching philosophies will inevitably cripple the Christian mission within sport.

Each approach mentioned in Section II carry with them positives and negatives, as will a Spirit-led approach. The hope was to give a general perspective on positive approaches to coaching, simply because the nuances and variables are too many to count. Merely bringing fun back into sport, especially youth athletics, helps combat many if not all of the problems written on in Section I. High school football coach David Younger targets the necessity of fun by admitting in the middle of his interview how he, and the team, inevitably end up not having any fun if all he does is focus on winning. Through much research, one of the main differences between transactional approaches and alternative philosophies, came down to what is emphasized by a coach, which often is peddled by certain individuals or society at large. In Section III, we dive into an alternative philosophy to coaching which has pieces of other approaches, specifics from coaches interviewed, and is shaped by a Pentecostal narrative. Does Pneumatology have anything to offer the coaching world?

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., 211-213.

SECTION III: THE THESIS

Introduction

“Continual learning is a key to effective leadership because no one can know everything there is to know. In leadership, things change...leaders take people to places they’ve never been before.”¹⁴⁸ To critique the title of Coach Krzyzewski's book, *Leading with the Heart* carries the potential to lead coaches down a self-centered path; the heart cannot be fully trusted. In contrast, a Spirit-led philosophy commissions coaches to nudge athletes in the direction where Creator God is already active. As King David famously put it, “Search me, O God, and know my heart! Try me and know my thoughts! And see if there be any grievous way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.”¹⁴⁹ What occurs when a person comes face to face with the reality of their own incompetence to properly lead themselves? “Self-trust is self-confidence,”¹⁵⁰ however, followers of Jesus can only fully trust God, as we are so often dictated by our sinful nature. A Christian coach, no matter the level of athletic competition, recognizes his/her submission to a greater Power than their own heart.

A Spirit-led coach veers away from self-help and result-oriented philosophies, paying attention to what the Spirit is doing in the lives of those they are privileged coach. The Spirit-led coaching philosophy determines a coach’s responsibility is not merely to

¹⁴⁸ Mike Krzyzewski and Donald T. Phillips, *Leading with the Heart: Coach K's Successful Strategies for Basketball, Business, and Life* (New York, NY: Warner Books, 2000), 231.

¹⁴⁹ Psalm 139:23-24.

¹⁵⁰ Dorfman, 201.

make a child a better person, but help athletes recognize who they are created to be. It is a common temptation for all coaches to attract attention rather than pay attention.¹⁵¹ As Leonard Sweet so brilliantly states, “Our quest is to be so filled with the Spirit of God and to be wearing interpretive Jesus goggles, that we not only notice, but are able to interpret and respond.”¹⁵² This is where a “Spirit-led” philosophy differs drastically from the previously documented coaching styles, but in order to grasp this approach, it benefits to take a brief look at the roots of Pentecostalism.

A Brief History of a Pentecostal Movement in William J. Seymour:

A Radical Future-Thinking Lover

Similar to the majority of Christian denominations, the history of Pentecostalism in America is one filled with highs and lows, ups and downs, camaraderie, splits, and the like. Regardless of human fallibility, the Pentecostal-Charismatic movement has outgrown most universal Christian movements and is the largest group of Christians behind the Roman Catholic Church,¹⁵³ estimating 612 million Pentecostals across twenty-three thousand Pentecostal/Charismatic/Neo-Charismatic denominations worldwide.¹⁵⁴ At a global level, Pentecostals have led the way in the advancement of the gospel abroad,

¹⁵¹ Leonard I. Sweet, *Nudge: Awakening Each Other to the God Who's Already There* (Colorado Springs, CO: David C. Cook, 2010), 50.

¹⁵² Ibid.

¹⁵³ Grant Wacker, *Heaven Below: Early Pentecostals and American Culture* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001), 7-8.

¹⁵⁴ Gastón Espinosa, *William J. Seymour and the Origins of Global Pentecostalism: A Biography and Documentary History* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2014), 7. In 2001, Vinson Synan estimated over 200 million Pentecostal/Charismatics worldwide, which means growth has tripled over the course of 2001 to 2014.

growing at a rate four times that of both Christianity and the world's population between 1970 and 2010.¹⁵⁵ No one person could have ever imagined such a growth track and would not dare take credit for the conversion explosion which continues. In the words of James Stewart, writer on the early twentieth century Welsh Revival which placed around 100,000 new people into churches:¹⁵⁶ "One of the features of a true movement of the Holy Spirit in revival is that He does not depend on one human personality in His workings."¹⁵⁷ Welsh revival leader Evan Roberts understood this, as did Azusa Street leader William Joseph Seymour.

In the middle of this great movement taking place in Wales, the Holy Spirit was stirring in America; what began in Western Europe, would spread to the States and beyond. Writer and eye witness to the Azusa Street Revival Frank Bartleman, heard about the Welsh Revival and became burdened for a similar move of the Spirit to take place in his home country.¹⁵⁸ At around the same time, a Black minister from the South arrived in Los Angeles with a desire to help pastor a Holiness Church.¹⁵⁹ Convinced of Charles Parham's teachings on Spirit baptism, Seymour would be at the epicenter of what

¹⁵⁵ "Christianity in its Global Context," Center for the Study of Global Christianity, accessed November 14, 2015, <http://www.gordonconwell.edu/ockenga/research/documents/ChristianityinitsGlobalContext.pdf>. Gordon-Conwell's Center for the Study of Global Christianity estimates by the year 2020, 709.8 million will adhere to a Pentecostal/Charismatic tradition worldwide.

¹⁵⁶ Allan Anderson, *An Introduction to Pentecostalism: Global Charismatic Christianity* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 91.

¹⁵⁷ James A. Stewart, *Invasion of Wales by the Spirit through Evan Roberts* (Fort Washington, PA: Christian Literature Crusade, 1963), 9.

¹⁵⁸ Frank Bartleman, *Azusa Street* (New Kensington, PA: Whitaker House, 1982), 10-11.

¹⁵⁹ Vinson Synan, ed., *The Century of the Holy Spirit: 100 Years of Pentecostal and Charismatic Renewal* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2001), 4.

some call “one of the mightiest revivals and missionary movements in the history of the church.”¹⁶⁰ Despite controversy swirling around who really founded this great worldwide movement, William J. Seymour stands out above the crowd as one of, if not *the*, most important figure in all of Pentecostalism.¹⁶¹ This humble man from Louisiana quietly influenced global Christianity as a whole and yet few know much about him.¹⁶² Externally, he was certainly an unlikely candidate for the birth of any type of revival and movement, let alone Pentecostal.

Born to slaves Simon Seymour and Phillis Salaba Seymour in the Louisiana bayou on May 2, 1870, by human intuition William Joseph Seymour could be considered the most unlikely candidate for the Holy Spirit to use to spark a worldwide phenomenon. He could barely read or write, was black, extremely poor, blind in his left eye, and never pastored before the Apostolic Faith Mission on Azusa Street.¹⁶³ These are only a few of the barriers stacked up against Seymour and yet, in his writings there is no evidence of complaint about upbringing or the cards dealt to him. We find zero excuses or reasoning why the Spirit could not and should not move in a special way. The man simply doused himself in prayer and prepared for the Spirit to manifest Himself.

This historical figurehead causes all to self-examine and challenges any modern-day excuse for another Azusa Street or great move of the Spirit to not take place. If a poor, uneducated, sickly black man during the climate of abhorrent prejudice can spark

¹⁶⁰ Synan, 1.

¹⁶¹ Espinosa, 7 & 9.

¹⁶² Some of this can be attributed to a lack of acknowledgment from many Pentecostal Historians, though a shift seems to be taking place and Seymour is getting more recognition he deserves.

¹⁶³ Larry E. Martin, *The Life and Ministry of William J. Seymour: And a History of the Azusa Street Revival* (Joplin, MO: Christian Life Books, 1999), 80.

the greatest Christian movement in the twentieth century, what other unlikely candidate is next? Though Seymour had much stacked against him, he was a unique strategist and competent theologian. In fact, a large segment of current day Christianity can trace their roots to Azusa Street and the leadership of Seymour. Despite all of the obstacles and opposition he faced, the great pastor knew how to articulate the Pentecostal message and had a solid theological framework to pull from. In other words, William Seymour was neither ignorant nor irrational, but humbly had a deep grasp of the Bible and issues of doctrine. There are three areas of his theology, summed up in three words, which aid in the understanding of global Pentecostalism.

Soteriology. Like Pentecostals in general, Seymour was heavily influenced by the heavily Arminian Holiness movement and Holiness teachings. Seymour viewed salvation as a “first work of grace,” which brought about justification for the one who repents.¹⁶⁴ To be justified meant one was pardoned by God and in a state of favor with Him, but was fully saved by continuing to walk with God.¹⁶⁵ In other words, salvation was both instantaneous and a continuation. Seymour took the gift and grace of salvation seriously, pointing out way ahead of our time a very real human struggle: “When we set up our own standard for holiness for God to work by, we dishonor God and set up an idol in our hearts...people have made shipwreck of their faith by setting up a standard for God to respect or come to.”¹⁶⁶ This self-educated black man articulated well the human tendency

¹⁶⁴ William J. Seymour and Larry E. Martin, *The Doctrines and Discipline of the Azusa Street Apostolic Faith Mission of Los Angeles, California* (Joplin, MO: Christian Life Books, 2000), 42.

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 65.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 64.

to come to God on whatever terms we see fit. His first work of grace concept does not allow for any human to set up their own standard for holiness but to approach God in humility, as sinners helplessly wrapped up in our sin and darkness.¹⁶⁷

As any good Arminian would attest, Seymour taught every person willfully chose the gift of grace offered through Jesus Christ, which spilled over into his belief in how salvation is worked out on a daily basis. He leans heavily on Paul's teaching in 2 Corinthians 1:15, where the great apostle expresses his desire for the Corinthian Christians to "have a second experience of grace," which Seymour took to mean sanctification as a second work of one's salvation.¹⁶⁸ The Azusa Street pastor's concept of a "second work of grace" had nothing to do with forgiveness and everything to do with cleansing;¹⁶⁹ driving a person away from his/her general inclination to sin, to the point in which God removes the basic desire to sin, allowing the individual to live a life free from it.¹⁷⁰

Though not everyone agrees with Seymour's two-pronged view of Christian maturation through justification and sanctification, it gave and continues to give a clear picture to those seeking the baptism in the Holy Spirit, which was the third experience.¹⁷¹ According to him and the Azusa Street leadership, the road to glory and power of a true Pentecost is found in being justified by Christ, sanctified for the sake of holiness, and

¹⁶⁷ Vinson Synan and Charles R. Fox, *William J. Seymour: Pioneer of the Azusa Street Revival* (Alachua, FL: Bridge Logos Foundation, 2012), LOC 928.

¹⁶⁸ Seymour, 42.

¹⁶⁹ Espinosa, 297.

¹⁷⁰ Synan and Fox, LOC 953.

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*, LOC 965.

baptized in the Holy Spirit. This third experience meant the follower of Jesus was flooded with love and power for service, evidenced by signs similar to what the disciples received on the day of Pentecost.¹⁷² This leads into his understanding of the Holy Spirit.

Pneumatology. There is an almost resolute stance on Holy Spirit baptism coming with a commission for all followers to step into. For Seymour and his adherents, to be baptized in the Spirit meant one was purposed and given power for world evangelization; God's Spirit and Word go hand in hand.¹⁷³ An interesting predicament in terms of tongues utterance being the sign of Spirit baptism is, Seymour did not speak in tongues before convinced of its importance.¹⁷⁴ Later on, after a falling out with Charles Parham, the Azusa Street revivalist would hold to the view of speaking in another "tongue" or language, as a sign for Spirit baptism and empowerment, not the sign as some Pentecostals have claimed under the influence of William H. Durham.¹⁷⁵ His belief of a physical manifestation or visible experience with the Holy Spirit was controversial and different from the Wesleyan-Holiness position, but also isolated himself from early Pentecostals who took a more rigid position on glossolalia. In other words, Seymour saw speaking in tongues as *a* sign, not necessarily *the* sign of Holy Spirit's active work within the Jesus-follower, whereas Durham and others saw tongue utterance as the only sign.

Based on this pneumatology, Seymour was truly a pioneer, emphasizing the seeking of the Spirit over an experience. Much to our embarrassment, often followers of

¹⁷² Seymour, 42-43.

¹⁷³ Ibid., 43.

¹⁷⁴ Koester, LOC 4728.

¹⁷⁵ Synan & Fox, LOC 2160.

Jesus seek “a sign” or feeling, rather than simply falling in love with Jesus and loving our neighbors. A sobering reminder of the pitfalls this contains, is found in Jesus’ rebuke of the Pharisees and Sadducees: “An evil and adulterous generation seeks for a sign, but no sign will be given to it except the sign of Jonah.”¹⁷⁶ Seymour understood the necessity of all the Holy Spirit is and has to offer the disciple—not merely a sign.¹⁷⁷ Part of why he carried this pneumatological view should be attributed to Charles Parham and his questionable response to Seymour when visiting Azusa for the first time. Parham was vocal about his disapproval of racial equality, felt manifestations of the flesh were taking place instead of authentic Spirit baptisms, and was harsh toward the Azusa Street leader.¹⁷⁸ The point of tension revolves around an individual who speaks in tongues, yet seems void of demonstrating fruit of the Spirit.

Ultimately, the Pentecostal forefather believed speaking in tongues as the only evidence of Spirit baptism limited God and ignores an ethical piece. Seymour’s pneumatology comes with an emphasis on the “Fruit of the Spirit,” claiming that speaking in tongues was not the apex of spirituality for Christians.¹⁷⁹ Signs, manifestations, gifts, and the like all had their place in the church. However, to be preoccupied by them was sinful and dangerous according to the great revivalist.¹⁸⁰

¹⁷⁶ Matthew 16:1-5.

¹⁷⁷ Seymour, 82. With his doctrine of speaking in tongues, Seymour emphasizes the importance of knowing what is true according to the Word of God and understanding the gift of the Spirit is more than speaking in another tongue. He is the one who teaches us truth amongst other things.

¹⁷⁸ Synan and Fox, LOC 1071-1087, and 1105.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid., LOC 1165-1175.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid., LOC 1175.

Indeed, William Seymour's pneumatology was broad and inclusive, which bled into his ecclesiology.

Ecclesiology. Spirit baptism upon "all flesh" was an inclusive directive, demonstrating all people are equal in the sight of God. For Seymour and the Azusa Street leadership, Spirit baptism was a mirroring of the great equalizer: Jesus' death for all humanity, regardless of race, background, status, intellect, ability, etc. The Church was to resemble Pentecost: "Now there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men from every nation under heaven...each one was hearing them speak in his own language."¹⁸¹ To have White, Black, Hispanic, Asian, and minorities standing side by side was extremely countercultural during the early 1900's. For Azusa Street, it was normal. For Seymour, this is how the Church was meant to be—one Church, subject to Jesus, holy, and set apart.¹⁸²

The position of the Church as holy and set apart from worldliness, was not a mandate to hide or isolate one's self from the world. For Seymour, it was a charge to engage in the world; to combat evil with good, darkness with light. The church's privilege was also to teach and train people in the teachings of Christ, blessing children, and being an organism which sends. Dr. Larry Martin quotes Seymour as saying missionaries "are going almost everyday."¹⁸³ A church ceases to be a "church" if it is not making disciples. This is the fundamental sign of Holy Spirit's work and activity within the Body. During the Azusa Street revival, many people felt called by God to go

¹⁸¹ Acts 2:5-6. Emphasis mine.

¹⁸² Seymour, 93-94.

¹⁸³ Seymour and Martin, 233.

internationally as missionaries with little to no money. The church would back them financially, sometimes without taking an offering, and with prayer.¹⁸⁴ In order for this type of ideology to continue, Seymour emphasized teaching their children the words and work of Jesus within their homes.¹⁸⁵ The making and sending of disciples marked the Azusa Street Mission and was a direct result of Seymour's doctrinal position on the Church.

When reading through the life of William Joseph Seymour and the launch of Pentecostalism as we know it, one thing is made evident: Disciples of Jesus would benefit from a return to some basics of our faith. Before making application to the athletic coach, there are several tools Western Christians must place back in the tool belt, fleshed out of the great Azusa Street leader's theology and the Pentecostal movement. First, *a Mission/Future-Oriented Urgency*. Jesus' commission to "Go, therefore, and make disciples of *nations*"¹⁸⁶ is not an option and was not taken as such by early Pentecostals. By October 1906 alone, eight foreign and thirty home missionaries were sent out from the Azusa Street warehouse and countless more within the next two years.¹⁸⁷ To be Pentecostal is to think, pray, prepare, and proclaim with the future in mind. The word "nations" in the Greek is *ethnos*, which translates as a race or a nation of people;¹⁸⁸ people who look, act, talk, and believe different than a Jesus follower, including our

¹⁸⁴ Ibid., 234.

¹⁸⁵ Seymour, 95.

¹⁸⁶ Matthew 28:19.

¹⁸⁷ Seymour and Martin, 234-235.

¹⁸⁸ Robert L. Thomas, *New American Standard Hebrew-Aramaic and Greek Dictionaries: Updated Edition* (Anaheim, CA: Foundation Publications, Inc., 1998).

enemies. Truly, for early American Pentecostals like William Seymour, there was a real sense they were “the last missionary surge before the close of human history.”¹⁸⁹ Though a bit overzealous at times, there was and remains an emphasis on making The Great Commission a reality through the sending of individuals and family’s to every *ethnos*.

Not that all followers of Jesus have neglected this mandate, but there is a natural drift away from mission which can take place in each disciple if not paying attention. Our tendency in the West, is to forego, forget, or fear the commission to make disciples who make disciples; to remain stuck in the past or focused merely on the present. Leonard Sweet is right when he claims Jesus’ “primary time zone is in the future.”¹⁹⁰ Each disciple of Jesus is automatically baptized into a mission-oriented faith, which is marked by what will and can and should happen, just as much as what has been and at one point took place. Christians are a going and sending people, lest we forget. A great Assemblies of God pastor by the name of Earl E. Book coined the phrase “Across the street, and around the world.”¹⁹¹ What a magnificent definition of what followers of Jesus do when we attach ourselves to the Savior.

A second tool is *Divine Love and Radical Inclusiveness*. Within the context of the greatest commandment ever given we cannot look past the scandalous nature of what our Lord is teaching. To love one’s neighbor as self, requires the Christian to broadly love

¹⁸⁹ Gary B. McGee, *Miracles, Missions, and American Pentecostalism* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2010), 160.

¹⁹⁰ Leonard Sweet (lecture, Monday Morning Zoom Chat, OR, Albany, October 31, 2016).

¹⁹¹ Earl Book was an Assemblies of God pastor at Albany First Assembly and the Oregon A/G District Superintendent during the 60’s, 70’s, and 80’s. He is considered a giant in the faith and a man of great vision.

those within and without the church.¹⁹² Jesus is broadening the Jewish people's understanding of who really was their neighbor; those they are to befriend. In Luke's account, the Master animates His point by making a Samaritan the good neighbor. In John 4, Jesus speaks with a Samaritan woman getting water late in the day. To a good Jew, Samaritan's would be considered anything but a neighbor to them.¹⁹³ Once again, Leonard Sweet gives insight when he claims "we have misread 'The Greatest Commandment' passage and made two commandments out of what Jesus said was really one commandment with two sides."¹⁹⁴ Early Pentecostal leaders understood what Sweet is claiming for us today: "we cannot separate our relationship with God from our relationship with each other...we live out our union and communion with God, not just in a safe sanctuary but in the streets and corridors, websites and walkways of life."¹⁹⁵ To be a neighbor, includes those we may consider enemies, outcasts, obnoxious, and the like.

Jesus' command takes on another form when those who are not yet walking with Jesus will know and be attracted to disciples of Jesus by our "love for one another."¹⁹⁶ William Seymour believed it was the practice of this "divine love" for one another no matter the denomination or theological proclivity that sets every follower free to be

¹⁹² D. R. W. Wood and I. Howard Marshall, *New Bible Dictionary*, 3rd ed. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1996), 814.

¹⁹³ Chad Brand, Charles Draper, and Archie England, eds., *Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary* (Nashville, TN: Holman Reference, 2003), 1185.

¹⁹⁴ Leonard Sweet, Facebook page, August 22, 2017 (1:34pm), accessed August 26, 2017, <https://www.facebook.com/lensweet>.

¹⁹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁹⁶ John 13:35.

unified.¹⁹⁷ He promoted a spirit of radical inclusiveness unrivaled during his day. This was made evident by the melting pot of races coming together, from all different backgrounds and experiences. In the face of “Jim Crow” laws which segregated blacks and whites, “perhaps the greatest miracle” was the “shocking” unity found within the Azusa Street warehouse.¹⁹⁸

Love and inclusion, for early Pentecostal leaders, included those who were non-Pentecostal as well. Seymour and his leadership would not allow any type of negative or slanderous talk toward denominations who held different theological convictions to take place.¹⁹⁹ After Hurricane Harvey hit the Houston area in 2017, megachurch pastor Joel Osteen was ridiculed for not opening his church to those who were displaced from their homes. Though Osteen’s church was incapable of housing families due to hurricane damage, that fact did not hold fellow Christians back from barbaric comments and social media tirades. With this in mind, it would be good for every disciple of Jesus to take a page out of the early Pentecostal movement’s book.²⁰⁰ They understood a unified Church is a dangerous Church. A unified Church is an unstoppable force. A unified Church is what turned the ancient world right side up. The Apostle Peter discovered Jesus’ heart

¹⁹⁷ Synan and Fox, LOC 1201.

¹⁹⁸ Koester, LOC 4712.

¹⁹⁹ Synan and Fox, LOC 1219.

²⁰⁰ Ed Mazza, "Brutal Memes Mock Joel Osteen Over His Hurricane Harvey Response," The Huffington Post, September 1, 2017, accessed September 1, 2017, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/joel-osteen-memes-houston_us_59a902f8e4b0354e44093d3b. Many of the worst, most cruel comments were reserved for those who claim to be disciples of Christ. Our nation has gone backwards when it comes to seeking of and rejoicing in the downfall and slip-ups of one another.

behind love and inclusion when encountering our Master in a vision: “What God has made clean, do not call common.”²⁰¹

Peter broke, like Jesus, cultural, ethnic, economic, and many other boundaries once he stepped into the house of Cornelius. That day, there was no Jew/Gentile separation. When we recognize exactly what Jesus has said in regard to love and inclusivity, contrary to current day definitions, followers have been given a great opportunity to befriend “those” unlike “us.” Adapting a statement made by pastor and author Scott Sauls, divine love and radical inclusiveness “happens when we move *toward* the people we are most tempted to avoid...who are best equipped to challenge our perspectives, push our buttons, and require us to put on love.”²⁰² William J. Seymour understood this and lived it out.

A final tool is *Unrelenting Prayer & Fasting*. Upon his return from Wales, Pastor Joseph Smale of First Baptist Church in Los Angeles was overcome with a longing to see the Spirit of God move powerfully as He was thousands of miles away. The recipe for this became 2 Chronicles 7:14 in the flesh: “if my people who are called by my name humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and forgive their sin and heal their land.” Throughout the Azusa Street account, specific and spontaneous times of prayer and fasting took place leading up to the revival. William J. Seymour held prayer meetings bursting at the seams and an

²⁰¹ Acts 10:15.

²⁰² Scott Sauls, *Befriend: Create Belonging in an Age of Judgment, Isolation, and Fear* (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale Momentum, 2016), 6.

“all-black prayer group on a ten-day fast.”²⁰³ There would be times Evan Roberts of the Welsh Revival, would walk into a meeting and sit for hours in silence and prayer.²⁰⁴

Bartleman makes a stinging statement when he wrote “Most believers find it easier to criticize than pray.”²⁰⁵ There is reason to contend this is the current state of the American Church: a lot of huddling, complaining, and criticizing—where more praying and fasting is needed.

This tool was a non-negotiable when it came to seeing the Spirit move in extraordinary ways: “‘The depth of revival will be determined by the depth of spiritual repentance.’ And this will hold true for all people, at all times.”²⁰⁶ These men and women of Pentecostal revival understood the drastic difference between having a “prayer life,” versus living out a life of prayer. The former is silo-ed and compartmentalized. The latter is holistic and integrated. As outlined by the life of Christ, His followers are compelled to a life of prayer—anticipating what may happen because His disciples have chosen to be raptured and overwhelmed by the desire to be with The Master.²⁰⁷

Too often we make prayer and fasting more and less than what it is; we complicate it, trivialize it, and misunderstand it. Yet, defending biblical truth and spreading the cause of Jesus must begin on our knees. The world will not be enraptured by the mission, love, and inclusivity of the message of Jesus if we, the Body, forgo

²⁰³ Espinoza, 54-55.

²⁰⁴ James A. Stewart, *Invasion of Wales by the Spirit through Evan Roberts* (Fort Washington, PA: Christian Literature Crusade, 1963), 12-13.

²⁰⁵ Bartleman, 14.

²⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 19.

²⁰⁷ Bartleman, 30.

opportunity to seek the face of our Savior. Do we have a desire to commune with the Savior? Is there an urgency to participate with His Spirit as He moves in, through, and around the disciple as they occupy space and place? Is the Church aware or dozing? The early Pentecostal leaders such as William J. Seymour were not perfect in all their dealing and leadership. Yet, they had a grasp on the fact that nothing would ever get off the ground on their own power. These men and women lived by the words of Jesus when answering His disciples after failing to exorcise a demon: if we “have as much faith as a mustard seed you can say to this hill, ‘Up you get and move over there!’ and it will move—you will find nothing is impossible. However, this kind does not go out except by prayer and fasting.”²⁰⁸ It is time the Christian coach unashamedly, become relentless in prayer and fasting, which is exactly what soccer coach Eric Ihde has done.

Claimed as one of the best things he ever implemented within his coaching philosophy, every season the girls high school soccer coach prays through his roster: “When I started praying for my kids individually, I started seeing them differently.”²⁰⁹ What a powerful conclusion this veteran instinctively came to; one inspired by the Holy Spirit, coach Eric Ihde personifies the Spirit-led approach to coaching. We now turn our attention to the specifics of this philosophy.

A Spirit-Led Approach

H. A. Dorfman puts together a persuasive coaching progression, charting the migration of coaching from a “whole-child centered” approach toward what he calls a

²⁰⁸ Matthew 17:20-21.

²⁰⁹ Erik Ihde.

“results-centered” approach. Typically, coaches are whole-child centered during the elementary years—focused on full child development. As children grow older, coaches become “learner-centered,” helping children learn fundamentals of the game. From early to late adolescence, coaches move into the “sport-centered” stage inevitably leading to the “self-centered” approach, which is mostly about getting results from competition to advance in job status. Dorfman points out how coaches are inclined to move away from treating the whole person toward a “results-centered” philosophy of teaching, which focuses almost entirely on winning rather than teaching.²¹⁰ His assessment is worth paying attention to in a day where billions of dollars are being spent, all with the desire to win and be successful regardless of the effect on the individual athlete.²¹¹ The four coaching approaches discussed in section II, although capable of producing results, come at a great cost to the athlete. These philosophies do not promote healthy connectivity, rather, they cultivate an identity crisis where an athlete’s sense of worth is grounded in their athletic ability.²¹²

In line with Merton’s posit of the human condition, we were created for connection,²¹³ a group of 33 children and youth professionals put out a ground-breaking solution to the mental and behavioral deterioration of American children. In searching for a solution, they discovered that a lack of connectedness fuels increasing adolescent issues

²¹⁰ Dorfman, 74-75.

²¹¹ Herve Collignon, Nicolas Sultan, and Clement Santander, "The Sports Market - Global Management Consulting Firm," 2011, accessed December 3, 2016, <https://www.atkearney.com/documents/10192/6f46b880-f8d1-4909-9960-cc605bb1ff34>.

²¹² Ehrmann, 100.

²¹³ Merton, xv, 3.

such as depression, anxiety, suicidal thoughts, and poor behavior in school and at home.²¹⁴ After years of study, these doctors and professionals coined a new social concept called “authoritative communities.” These communities of people seek to cultivate environments where children’s lives are understood and improved;²¹⁵ sports can and should be such an environment. However, these coaching styles cannot foster an environment where healthy connection takes place. More importantly, they fall drastically short of producing positive stories for maximum impact.²¹⁶ They fail to satisfy the deepest of longings within an athlete’s soul—unconditional love; to know, be known, and make known. Merton eloquently states this longing: “The only desire that is infallibly fulfilled is the desire to be loved by God.”²¹⁷ This is a uniquely Christian concept and as such, the Christian coach is in a remarkable position. Super Bowl winning coach Tony Dungy agrees and focuses on athletes viewing their sport as something they are gifted and privileged to do, not something that defines them.²¹⁸ This is where a new philosophy comes into play in three key areas: Spirit-empowered witness (Or mission), atmosphere cultivation, and apprenticeship.

²¹⁴ Commission on Children at Risk, *Hardwired to Connect: The New Scientific Case for Authoritative Communities* (New York, NY: Institute for American Values, 2003), 5.

²¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 6-7.

²¹⁶ Ehrmann, 47.

²¹⁷ Merton, 17.

²¹⁸ Tony Dungy and Nathan Whitaker, *Quiet Strength: A Memoir* (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 2007), 51.

Mission

As Pentecostals continue to lead the way in gospel advancement at a global level becoming the largest group of Christians behind the Roman Catholic church,²¹⁹ the growth of interest in sports amongst evangelicals has climbed into a near unhealthy obsession. As a pastor, I hear of church attendance cross-denominationally plummeting, including my own, if Sunday morning football intersects with Sunday morning worship. In my own congregation, I have conversation after conversation with members who intentionally skip church to “watch the game,” while they “grab the message online.”²²⁰ Christian athletes and coaches such as Stephen Curry, Drew Brees, and Tony Dungy, who are vocal about their faith, contribute in my opinion, to the rise of evangelicals’ preoccupation with sports.

Pentecostals, and Evangelicals at large, have developed a wide range of missiological resources to equip the follower of Jesus for mission, yet, with the fixation of athletics, little has been done to resource and develop a practical philosophy for the Christian coach, in order to live out the *missio dei* amidst an increasingly pluralistic American culture. Evangelicals are well represented in all areas of sports, however, models of coaching and playing are largely secular. Section I laid the foundation for an alternative approach, starting with Pentecostals strong emphasis on gospel mission.

From the beginning, Pentecostal people have been a mission/witness-driven people and, with urgency, took seriously the call to herald good news around the world.

²¹⁹ Wacker, 7-8.

²²⁰ All of our pastors have had multiple conversations with different men in our church in regard to their struggle of prioritizing church attendance over “couch” attendance.

At a grass roots Pentecostal Bible college in the early 1900's, Charles Fox Parham, recognized as the theological father of the modern Pentecostal movement, is accredited to place an emphasis on “tongues” as a supernatural impartation of human languages for the purpose of world evangelization.²²¹ Across “the pond” in the late 1800's, “higher life” teachers (coming out of “Higher Life” conferences held in Keswick, England) communicated that the “Baptism with the Spirit” was properly understood as “a series of experiences that equipped for extraordinary feats of witness and service.”²²² In addition, American preacher Reuben A. Torrey once declared that the Spirit baptism “is not primarily intended to make believers happy nor holy, but to make them useful.”²²³ From the very beginning, Pentecostalism as a movement has been at the forefront of Christ's mission command.

Following the Azusa Street Revival in 1906, resistance and persecution broke out against the revival taking place, however, Pentecostal followers were energized and inspired by all the Holy Spirit was doing. In addition to invigorating new life into an “over-organized and spiritless body,” the small yet growing Pentecostal movement emphasized living on mission, taking every opportunity to witness wherever they were—that the Holy Spirit and the gospel should never been limited to the four walls of a building.²²⁴ From a Pentecostal perspective, to be empowered for witness is to live

²²¹ Vinson Synan, 3.

²²² Wacker, 2.

²²³ Reuben A. Torrey, *What the Bible Teaches* (New York, NY: Fleming Revel, 1898), 272.

²²⁴ Robert Owens, *The Century of the Holy Spirit: 100 Years of Pentecostal and Charismatic Renewal*, ed. Vinson Sinan (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2001), 54.

missionally, “across the street and around the world;”²²⁵ across ethnic, cultural, generational, and social boundaries. This documented urgency and broad view of world evangelism demonstrates how Pentecostals typically tie the work of the Spirit to eschatology. But how does this break down practically for us today? What does it look like to live on mission and Spirit empowered in today’s world, especially in the realm of athletics and coaching? I believe from the Acts 1 and 2 narrative, we can draw out four crucial pneumatological missiology principles.

Diversity, Unity, Exclusivity, and Inclusivity.

With any given sport a coach is dealing with an extremely diverse group of individuals who make up a team. Similar to Pentecost, a squad of players range in height, weight, personality, ethnic, socio-economic backgrounds, and language differences; diverse ways of learning, hearing, responding, and adapting to surroundings and instruction. As briefly stated earlier, the nations are represented on every athletic team being coached.

Within the Lukan account of Pentecost in the city of Jerusalem, we know for a fact that there were both devout Jews and “religious” Jews present once the Spirit fell upon the “upper room.” Theologian and Pentecostal scholar, Amos Yong, notes that “Jewishness” in the ancient world functioned “as an ethical and political marker,” meaning many different cultures and languages shaped the identity of the early

²²⁵ Earl Book.

Church.²²⁶ Gentile converts to Judaism, known as “proselytes,”²²⁷ and an array of geographically diverse individuals come to celebrate together the “Feast of Weeks” and bring with them a “variety of practices, values, customs, and traditions into their Jewish Identity.”²²⁸

In Acts chapter 1, Jesus promised His disciples will be “my *witnesses*” unto all nations²²⁹—a diversity of people from the East to the West, differing in values, customs, ethnicity, height, weight, gender, personally, and abilities. In part, the responsibility of the Christian coach is to wrestle with the tension of such diversity amongst their team and allow the Spirit to work in individual’s hearts, all the while being prepared to herald good news when the Spirit opens up opportunity. After all, the beauty of Christianity is its diversity and the Spirit attests to this truth.

As we just discussed, Luke makes perfectly clear the diversity of values, customs, and traditions represented at Pentecost; each devout Jew represented in Jerusalem could hear their native tongue being uttered by those whose language was not their own. Relationship was created because of this miracle; understanding and unity came about because of this outpouring of God’s Spirit. In other words, there was unity-in-diversity. One of the miracles of Pentecost was to linguistically unify, in a sense, humanity which has been divided by language since the tower of Babel incident long before.²³⁰ This was

²²⁶ Amos Yong, *The Missiological Spirit: Christian Mission Theology in the Third Millennium Global Context* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2014), 41.

²²⁷ Acts 2:11.

²²⁸ Yong, 42.

²²⁹ Acts 1:8. Emphasis mine.

²³⁰ Yong, 40-41.

not done on human terms with human ability, but orchestrated by the Spirit.²³¹ Unity does not come about by human hands—it is not manmade. It is always a byproduct of the Spirit at work within and through the leader or coach, parallel to our example of the “upper room” that day. Left to themselves, the faithful 120 would never have experienced the level of relationship, unity, and community brought about through the Spirit’s infilling.²³² It is no wonder “about three thousand souls” were added to the Kingdom later than day.²³³

With all confidence and boldness, the unifying factor a Christian coach must tap into is the Spirit. The Holy Spirit gives insight and wisdom that we cannot pull from on our own accord. The Spirit can quicken the heart of a coach when it seems communication has completely broken down with an athlete. The Spirit brings to mind illustration, metaphor, analogy, and language that aids the coach in uniting, not just individual players and their team as a whole, but those same individuals who are outside relationship, unity, and community with their Creator, keeping in mind the priority of Jesus’ mission command. The Spirit, from the very beginning, empowers us to break through language, cultural, socio-economic, and many other barriers, in hopes that all may come to the saving work and grace of our Savior Jesus. But, just because unity is a grounded pneumatological principle, does not mean all will choose to yield their lives Jesus.

²³¹ Ibid.

²³² Ibid.

²³³ Acts 2:41.

Exclusivity. The writer of Hebrews makes a bold proclamation that the Scriptures, and truly the gospel as a whole, divides.²³⁴ In Acts, Luke tells us that others mocked the disciples in the upper room, claiming “They are filled with new wine,” or sweet wine that would have been well fermented.²³⁵ This is a clue that not all people respond positively to the outwardly manifested inner workings of the Holy Spirit. Peter’s message, which follows the Spirit’s outpouring, expresses the response required by us to the Spirit’s promptings and inward work.²³⁶ A classic story of exclusivity, shared by all three of the synoptics, tells of Jesus’ interaction with a rich man who desired to inherit eternal life.²³⁷ The encounter shows, amongst other things, how impossible it is for the human heart to submit to the leadership of Jesus Christ, apart from the work and draw of God’s Spirit. To live on mission with Jesus is to say “no” to all other “missions,” making the Spirit’s work exclusive. One of the many paradoxes of Christianity is holding exclusivity in tandem with inclusivity. In other words, because there is unity within diversity, as in the Trinity, shown by the Spirit’s outpouring on the day of Pentecost, all are invited to respond to the Spirit’s call for reconciliation, or inclusion, but are free to reject and refuse surrendering to Jesus’ way and authority.

The Christian coach, remaining on mission with Jesus, will undoubtedly find himself/herself in the same position Jesus did with a rich young man. Not every athlete

²³⁴ Hebrews 4:12-13.

²³⁵ F.F. Bruce, *Commentary on the Book of the Acts; the English Text, with Introduction, Exposition, and Notes* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1954), 65.

²³⁶ Acts 2:14-40.

²³⁷ Matthew 19:16-30, Mark 10:17-31, & Luke 18:18-30.

will respond to the Spirit working in and through the coach and in themselves. Not every athlete will choose to succumb to the Spirit's call for repentance and reconciliation. Some athletes will choose to ignore and/or be offended by the Christian coach's worldview and desire to live missionally. It is during these times of "sadness," the coach must lean on the promises of God and trust that the Spirit is always at work.²³⁸

Inclusivity. The final pneumatological principle is inclusivity. At the heart of pneumatological missiology is an evangelism that is both dialogue and proclamation.²³⁹ As Christians, we believe the Spirit is at work across all ethnicities, cultures, and backgrounds, which includes all those who are engaged in differing religions. Yong beckons us to "Cross-fertilization," or the crossing over into other faiths in hopes to engage in dialogue and presentation of the gospel.²⁴⁰ A concept brought out on the day of Pentecost is the inclusion of any and everyone in a dialogue of sorts, where people are given the opportunity to be "amazed and perplexed" at the gospel and work of the Spirit, no matter their worldview.²⁴¹ As we just briefly explored, there are things uniquely exclusive to the Christian faith, yet there are likewise unique inclusive features. When it comes to the inclusivity of God's Spirit and the gospel, Amos Yong puts it well,

With pneumatology, however, we have a uniquely inclusive dynamic wherein there is the potential unfolding of 'Christianity' as a universalizing faith. This universalizing dynamic was latent in the Jewish tradition, even going back to Yahweh's promise to Abraham's blessing as reaching to all the families of the earth (Gen. 12:3). At Pentecost, this latency was made manifest in the Spirit poured out on all flesh—hence Christianity's unique inclusivism. I suggest that

²³⁸ Luke 18:24, 27-29.

²³⁹ Yong, *The Missiological Spirit*, 63.

²⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 66.

²⁴¹ Acts 2:12.

Pentecost provides not just an anthropological commonality but a theological norm for assessing the encounter between faiths.²⁴²

In other words, Yong powerfully asserts the outpouring of the Spirit on Pentecost marks Christianity as a uniquely inclusive faith, one that welcomes and is not afraid of different beliefs, ideologies, world-views, disagreements, and the like. To live on mission and Spirit empowered, then, is to “cross-fertilize;” to open our eyes to what the Spirit and Christ are up to in other religions, being careful to avoid syncretism.²⁴³ After all, we can say with confidence that the Acts 2 account includes men of other religions, leading us to believe the Spirit is alive and active in other faiths.²⁴⁴

Therefore, the Christian coach should be confident to engage in “cross-fertilization;” dialogue and proclamation whenever opportunity arises. Inevitably, the Christian coach may be tempted to limit dialogue with athletes to topics exclusively involving sports. To be “Christian” means to broaden our thinking and reach. It is the privilege of every coach to pay attention to the working of the Spirit, engage in conversations outside of the athletic arena, and nudge those being trained in their field of athletic gifting toward a God who is always at work, no matter what the individual claims to believe or not believe.²⁴⁵

²⁴² Yong, 73.

²⁴³ Ibid., 67-68.

²⁴⁴ Ibid., 70.

²⁴⁵ Leonard Sweet, *Nudge*, 21.

Atmosphere Cultivation

“Culture—not vision or strategy—is the most powerful factor in *any* organization.”²⁴⁶ The Church is not the only “organization” to struggle with change and creating healthy atmospheres to maximize performance. This is especially true when it comes to management and leadership of sports teams. It is my belief that coaches, by partnering with the Holy Spirit, can be preemptive and avoid many downfalls accompanied by a lack of atmospheric cultivation.²⁴⁷ The Christian coach does not need to be timid when it comes to infusing sound biblical methodology into the DNA of their team; Pentecostal distinctives infused into the philosophy of every Christian coach, can have a profound impact on the culture and virtues of each team being led.

A desire is to draw attention to a few, out of what could be many, important virtues every Christian coach should instill into their team and how Holy Spirit leads us to accomplish this. Culture cultivation begins with what coaches deem as most important; it is far more *virtue-driven*, than *program-driven*, no matter the sport being coached.²⁴⁸ We are uniquely wired to create,²⁴⁹ and yet, if the Christian coach does not properly understand the importance of beginning with a “Kingdom agenda,”²⁵⁰ his/her whole

²⁴⁶ Samuel Chand, *Cracking Your Church’s Cultural Code: Seven Keys to Unleashing Vision and Inspiration* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2011), 2. Emphasis mine.

²⁴⁷ Or “culture cultivation.” I will use both terms interchangeably.

²⁴⁸ Robert Lewis and Wayne Cordeiro, *Culture Shift: Transforming Your Church from the Inside Out* (Oxford, UK: Monarch Books, 2015), 19-20.

²⁴⁹ Andy Crouch, *Culture Making: Rediscovering Our Creative Calling* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2008), 22 & 23.

²⁵⁰ Lewis and Cordeiro, *Culture Shift*, 21.

cultural structure can potentially collapse. Pastor Erwin McManus in his forward to the book *Culture Shift* makes a transferable statement about the book, that every church leader looking to cultivate an effective culture to reach people for the gospel must live a life that is responsive to the promptings of Holy Spirit. In other words, atmosphere cultivation is much more about “...the creation of [an] improvisational ethos rather than the skill of improvisation...a life of shaping culture through improvisation.”²⁵¹ This is not only the task of those in church leadership, but those in the world of sports. In his book, *The Power of a Whisper*, Pastor Bill Hybels makes a profound statement about the Spirit of God: “The God of the Scriptures is irrepressibly communal, hopelessly familial, and his whispers are still ours to hear.”²⁵² With that said, three ways the Spirit prompts the coach aid in shaping atmosphere.

Elijah and the Art of Being Led by the Spirit. In the book of First Kings we stumble upon Elijah, one of the greatest prophets who ever walked the ancient world. In chapter eighteen, Yahweh’s prophet faces off against hundreds of false prophets and finds himself at the center of a great victory for the One True God.²⁵³ We would expect a great victory parade and/or march to have issued afterward; Yahweh has flexed His power—His enemies were defeated, and wickedness was dealt a crippling blow. However, in chapter nineteen of the same book, not soon after victory, we find Elijah fleeing for his life. It is in this moment, he encounters God in a most unique and genuine way,

²⁵¹ Ibid., xviii & xix.

²⁵² Bill Hybels, *The Power of a Whisper: Hearing God. Having the Guts to Respond* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010), 43.

²⁵³ 1 Kings 18.

There he came to a cave and lodged in it. And behold, the word of the Lord came to him, and he said to him, ‘What are you doing here, Elijah?’ He said, ‘I have been very jealous for the Lord, the God of hosts. For the people of Israel have forsaken your covenant, thrown down your altars, and killed your prophets with the sword, and I, even I only, am left, and they seek my life, to take it away.’ And he said, ‘Go out and stand on the mount before the Lord.’ And behold, the Lord passed by, and a great and strong wind tore the mountains and broke in pieces the rocks before the Lord, but the Lord was not in the wind. And after the wind an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake. And after the earthquake a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire. And after the fire *the sound of a low whisper*.²⁵⁴

As a coach, there is nothing more exhilarating like the highs of victory, and few things more devastating than a difficult defeat. Right after a large victory over the prophets of Baal, Elijah loses the battle of winning over Jezebel and king Ahaz; all did not turn out well. He feels the pains of defeat to the point of desiring death,²⁵⁵ when Yahweh once again breaks through at a critical moment. A fascinating insight about this passage of Scripture, is the subtlety of the moment. There is no sound more powerful than that of the Spirit of God’s low, quiet, instructive whisper. If the Christian coach does not choose to be led by the whispers of the Spirit, as Elijah was, he/she is inevitably choosing to be led by some other voice, which demonstrates—as harsh as it may sound—a flirting with idolatry.

Holy Spirit is alive and active, and it is our privilege to discern where He is and what He is asking of us. In our society, sports teams and athletic programs are peppered with big-personality coaches who attract more attention than is necessary. From little league to the big leagues, ego-driven characters attract much media attention. However, if we learn one thing from Elijah amidst his most un-finest hour, it is this: the best coaches

²⁵⁴ I Kings, 19:9-12. Emphasis mine.

²⁵⁵ I Kings 19:4.

are not the attention getters, but attention givers;²⁵⁶ Yahweh reminded Elijah that life is not all about him and he is not alone. As Jesus-followers, our quest is to be so filled with the Spirit of God, that we not only notice, but are able to discern and respond to what He has for us next.²⁵⁷ As the coach of a sports team, creating an expectant culture, a culture of active listening and discernment, will set a team on the right foot from the practice field to game day. The question will always be, “As the leader of this team, am I paying attention to the whispering of the Spirit?” It always begins with the coach.

The Apostle Peter, Visions, Dreams, and Miracles. Part way through the book of Acts, we come across a Jewish experience of epic proportions which has more in common with culture creation for the Christian coach than one may realize. The Apostle Peter, leader of the rapidly growing Christian movement, has a vision given by the Holy Spirit to do the unthinkable: eat animals considered unacceptable by Jewish law.²⁵⁸ Peter refuses to do what the “Voice” commands and ends up being reprimanded by the same Voice.²⁵⁹ Notice during this wrestling, the clash between what is culturally normative—the inhibition of eating unclean animals—and the shaping of something new through the Spirit.

In light of Peter’s experience, the prophet Joel projected dreams, visions, and wonders would accompany the Holy Spirit’s outpouring.²⁶⁰ With this prophecy there are

²⁵⁶ Adapted from Len Sweet and contextualized.

²⁵⁷ Sweet, *Nudge*, 50.

²⁵⁸ Acts 10:10-13.

²⁵⁹ Acts 10:14-15.

²⁶⁰ Joel 2:28-30; Acts 2:17-27.

no constraints nor limitations on the Spirit and His power; all who are followers of Jesus have the ability to perceive the will of the Father through visions, dreams, and the like.²⁶¹

Why should it be any different in our day? Across Africa and the Middle East, we are hearing and reading story after story of dreams, visions, and miracles taking place in the lives of Muslims. Stories like Omar, who called out to every god including Jesus, and through a vision only the God of the Bible answered.²⁶² It is a documented fact: “Stories of Muslims coming to faith in Christ because of a vision or dream are not uncommon.”²⁶³ This is certainly the story of Muslim-turned-Christian Nabeel Qureshi²⁶⁴ and many of the millions of converts to Christianity in the broader Islamic world.²⁶⁵

The concept is uncomplicated, yet easily complicated. Cultivating atmosphere is a matter of “sub-creation,”²⁶⁶ in partnership with the Holy Spirit, not for the purpose of winning a football or basketball game, but to win the heart of each athlete entrusted to the coach. What would happen if every Christian coach prayed for the healing of an injured athlete? What would it look like if each coach was open to the guidance of the Spirit

²⁶¹ Andrew Knowles, *The Bible Guide* (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg, 2001), 359.

²⁶² Stuart Robinson, *Mosques & Miracles: Revealing Islam and God's Grace* (Upper Mt Gravatt, Australia: CityHarvest Publications, 2003), 254-255.

²⁶³ "John Piper 'Suspicious' of Muslim Dreams of Jesus," *Leadership Journal*, accessed April 23, 2016, <http://www.christianitytoday.com/le/2011/november-online-only/john-piper-suspicious-of-muslim-dreams-of-jesus.html>.

²⁶⁴ Nabeel Qureshi, *Seeking Allah, Finding Jesus: A Devout Muslim Encounters Christianity* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2014), 260-272.

²⁶⁵ "World Revival Network Blog: The Underground Revival in the Middle-East that Might Just Take Down Islam." *World Revival Network Blog: The Underground Revival in the Middle-East That Might Just Take Down Islam*. March 26, 2016.

²⁶⁶ Leonard Sweet (lecture, DMIN Advance #1, Portland, September 2, 2015). We are not the ones who create. The Creator God creates and we join Him in creating, hence, the term “sub-create.”

through dreams and visions? The Apostle Peter argued with the Spirit of God and struggled with a shift in culture, yet eventually, he obeyed. We must cultivate an atmosphere that makes room for the Spirit to work, no matter how unorthodox it may seem; an environment where the miraculous is not only accepted, but anticipated.

Jesus' instructions resonate. Right in the middle of Jesus' longest and greatest monologue, He gives a word of encouragement to His apprentices which should reverberate within the Christian coach: "But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you."²⁶⁷ In Revelation 2:7, Jesus speaks to the Apostle John in a vision: "He who has an ear, let him hear *what the Spirit says* to the churches."²⁶⁸ Throughout Church history, there has been no shortage of signs and wonders, miracles and the supernatural taking place.²⁶⁹ Foreign missionaries have and continue to lend an ear and trust the Spirit of God to do a special work in all people groups "to propel the church forward."²⁷⁰ Within the 19th and 20th centuries' missional movement, a growing anticipation to find out what the Spirit might do in whatever cultural setting was evident.²⁷¹ As a result, a cross-denominational outpouring of the Spirit took place in Europe and America, culminating in a massive prayer movement and revivals around the world.²⁷² How much more for all those who profess the name of Jesus and coach a sport's

²⁶⁷ John 14:26.

²⁶⁸ Revelation 2:7. Emphasis mine.

²⁶⁹ McGee, *Miracles, Missions, and American Pentecostalism*, 4-6.

²⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 22.

²⁷¹ *Ibid.*

²⁷² *Ibid.*, 25-29.

team? Why not an outpouring of the Spirit on the practice field, in the locker room, during pre-game and post-game, or at an awards ceremony? To shape a culture which anticipates the Spirit to move, is a culture that is both an adventure and attractive to coaches and athletes alike.

Similar to earlier missionaries, because the Holy Spirit operates with the full authority to act in place of our Savior,²⁷³ we can trust He will prod, lead, and guide us to accomplish His Kingdom purposes as we craft a culture more profound than simply winning. Like Joshua, we can be confident the Spirit is active wherever we go, in whatever we do.²⁷⁴ The Spirit speaks to the coach who has a desire to hear,²⁷⁵ and it is little acts of obedience that invite His power to fully flow in a coach's life.²⁷⁶ If we truly believe a Christian coach's primary mission is advancing the Kingdom of God, we must shape the culture of our teams in such a way that affords life change to take place. Specifically, a "culture of virtue" seems most desirable for the Christian coach.

Virtue Over Values.

Professor and author Mike McNamee, believes sport offers one of the best vehicles for "moral education" in light of the world's current moral condition.²⁷⁷ He

²⁷³ D. A. Carson, *The Farewell Discourse and Final Prayer of Jesus: An Exposition of John 14–17* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1988), 39.

²⁷⁴ Joshua 1:9.

²⁷⁵ Hybels, 96.

²⁷⁶ Ibid., 56.

²⁷⁷ McNamee, *Youth Sport and Spirituality*, 74.

points out how the vehicles for morality in early European culture were taught through theatre and play. McNamee writes:

In a world where the Enlightenment myth of shared morality is assaulted on every side by anthropologists, cultural commentators, and philosophers alike, sports offer a cognitively simple canvass of good and evil writ large in the everyday contexts of the arena, the court, the field, and of course the back pages of our newspapers and the screens of our televisions.²⁷⁸

Whether one agrees or not, McNamee links sport to the art of virtue. The word *aretē* in the ancient Greek means “moral goodness”²⁷⁹ or “excellence,”²⁸⁰ but in human terms, a virtue is a way of being humanly excellent, and sports provides an outlet to learn or acquire excellence; we are not born virtuous, but learn excellence over time.²⁸¹ This is important to know when cultivating atmosphere, because coaches are “moral educators, whether they want to be or not.”²⁸²

The term “virtue” is more appropriate and palpable than “value.” Think of a brand new car. Once the the car is driven off a lot, depreciation sets in and the *value* of a vehicle immediately drops. Values shift and change depending on society, while virtues remain consistent and resolute. Followers of Jesus do not have values, we hold to virtues. With a virtuous framework in mine, a Spirit-led approach to coaching asks and answers the question, “What type of virtues does the *Holy Spirit* promote and how do they apply

²⁷⁸ Ibid.

²⁷⁹ Thomas, *New American Standard Hebrew-Aramaic and Greek Dictionaries*.

²⁸⁰ James Swanson, *Dictionary of Biblical Languages with Semantic Domains: Greek (New Testament)*. electronic ed. (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1997).

²⁸¹ McNamee, *Youth Sport and Spirituality*, 76.

²⁸² Craig Edward Clifford and Randolph M. Freezell. *Sport and Character: Reclaiming the Principles of Sportsmanship* (Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics, 2010), 16.

to the coach?”²⁸³ Three primary virtues pop up throughout Scripture. The first is a virtue of “fruit.”

Coaches have a unique role in the lives of those they lead in that they spend a great deal of time and energy with their athletes. The Christian coach has been graced with an opportunity to influence, develop, and shape team atmosphere via virtues and values—what is deemed as most important. Throughout civilization past to present, there is no virtue nor better praxis to pattern life after than the “fruit of the Spirit.” With the virtues of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, and self-control, the Apostle Paul contrasts the difference between man-made moralism and supernatural-religion or belief.²⁸⁴ Similar to individual lives, cultivation of these virtues within the context of a sports team battles against the things which bring decay and are opposed to healthy system of virtue.²⁸⁵

Within the domain of athletics, we have all too often been privy to the opposite of these virtues. Instead, coaches tend to be overly aggressive and display more “strife, jealousy,” and “fits of rage,”²⁸⁶ leading by poor example. Most recently, a brawl between a couple of opposing little league baseball coaches took place in front of both parents and players alike.²⁸⁷ What we have from the lowest to the highest of league competition, is a

²⁸³ McNamee, *Youth Sport and Spirituality*, 75.

²⁸⁴ Robert James Utley, Vol. 11, *Paul's First Letters: Galatians and I & II Thessalonians*. Study Guide Commentary Series (Marshall, TX: Bible Lessons International, 1997), 60.

²⁸⁵ Galatians 5:16-26.

²⁸⁶ Galatians 5:20.

²⁸⁷ "Fight Broke between Coaches on Little League Baseball Field." YouTube. 2016. Accessed April 24, 2016. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I-EMSGJr_LE.

lack of “fruit-bearing,” which must always begin with the coach. Clark Power correctly points out how “many sport programs such as the American Sport Education Program, Positive Coaching Alliance, and Character Counts Sports, suggest we must focus less on building the character of children and spend a greater amount of energy on improving the behavior of their coaches.”²⁸⁸ He goes on to comment about the propensity of most coaches is to respond during undesirable incidents by reacting toward officials or by reprimanding players.²⁸⁹ We are far more likely to observe a coach responding inappropriately to “incidents of undesirable behavior,” rather than shaping virtues such as gentleness, patience, and self-control; using undesirable incidents as opportunities to teach, mold, and develop.²⁹⁰ Observations such as these should not be habit for the Christian coach. The “fruit of the Spirit” gives no room for such behavior and are justifiably our foundational virtues for atmosphere cultivation, leading to a second virtue: perseverance.

If the “fruit of the Spirit” are foundational virtues, then perseverance is the “grit” virtue within a team’s culture. The ancient Greek word for persevere is *paramenō*, which means to “remain with,” “continue,”²⁹¹ or “to stay with.”²⁹² The Apostle Paul captures the nuance of this terminology in Romans chapter 8, where he breaks down for his readers an

²⁸⁸ Clark Power, *Youth Sport and Spirituality*, 88-89.

²⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 91.

²⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

²⁹¹ Johannes P. Louw and Eugene Albert Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains*. electronic ed. of the 2nd ed. (New York, NY: United Bible Societies, 1996), 728.

²⁹² Swanson, *Dictionary of Biblical Languages With Semantic Domains*.

important characteristic of the Spirit: “Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness...the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.”²⁹³ Although Paul is specifically referring to the Spirit helping followers with prayer, the intention is with regard to persevering through suffering and having confidence to face each day whatever it may bring.²⁹⁴ Throughout the Old Testament, Yahweh remained with a rebellious Israel. Throughout the New Testament, a bruised and persecuted early Church stayed with the gospel message, no matter the cost. We get incredible teachings on perseverance from James, Peter, and Paul, because they understood the Holy Spirit to be their sustainer during the most disappointing and troubling of times.²⁹⁵ To adapt from a well known scholar on the commentary of Romans 8, God does not stand distant from the pain of coaches and athletes alike, “but comes to dwell in the middle of it in the person and power of the [S]pirit.”²⁹⁶

Reflecting on hard work, legendary coach John Wooden wrote: “The player who gives his best is sure of success.”²⁹⁷ Few things develop character like the virtue of persevering and giving each day your best; staying with and continuing in the face of opposition. Whether on or off the practice and game field, pushing through a poor call or lack thereof, shaking off a hard hit, an error, or miscommunication, all have to do with

²⁹³ Romans 8:26-27.

²⁹⁴ Timothy Keller (EDT). *Romans 8-16 for you* (The Good Book Co., 2015), 41.

²⁹⁵ Everett F. Harrison, *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, Vol. 10, *Romans*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelain (Grand Rapids, MI: Regency Reference Library, 1976), 95.

²⁹⁶ N. T. Wright, *Paul for Everyone: Romans: Part One* (London: SPCK, 2004), 154.

²⁹⁷ John Wooden and Steve Jamison, *Wooden on Leadership* (New York, NY: McGraw-Hill, 2005), 17.

staying and remaining with the mission, goals and tasks placed before the team. This is important because if there is no opponent, no competition, no opportunity to excel, and zero opposition, the athlete will never discover their full potential.²⁹⁸ Perseverance flies in the face of giving up, giving in, and quitting, and is transferable to a world outside of athletics.²⁹⁹ It is the Christian coach's responsibility to take his/her cue from the Spirit and shape a culture of perseverance, which collides into a final virtue, the virtue of honesty.

During the formation of the early church, followers "were of one heart and soul... There was not a needy person among them," selling and sacrificing, taking care of each other as the Church should.³⁰⁰ While this is taking place, the apostles encounter a husband and wife who, in an attempt to reap the benefits of being viewed as generous and people of great faith,³⁰¹ "lie to the Holy Spirit" and immediately drop dead for it.³⁰² The account demonstrates a divine disapproval for dishonesty and deception;³⁰³ the Holy Spirit characterizes honesty and expects the Christian coach to develop it into the fabric of team culture.

A team that embodies the virtue of honesty breeds trust, trust builds confidence, and confidence unleashes momentum. A current example can be found in the Golden

²⁹⁸ Clifford and Feezell, *Coaching for Character: Reclaiming the Principles of Sportsmanship*, 11, 29-30.

²⁹⁹ Ibid., 32-33.

³⁰⁰ Acts 4:32-37.

³⁰¹ F. F. Bruce, *Zondervan Bible Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2008), 1251.

³⁰² Acts 5:1-11.

³⁰³ Bruce, 1251.

State Warriors, who have been nearly unbeatable for the last two years.³⁰⁴ With respect to Benjamin Franklin, honesty is not the best *policy* but the best *approach*,³⁰⁵ and though this virtue may be well known, the Christian coach cannot overlook it. We live in a day where corruption around the sports world rules our headlines, to the point where trust by those who love athletics is wearing thin.³⁰⁶ From major sporting events such as the Olympics and the World Cup, all the way down to track and field, there is plenty of corruption and a real drought of honesty.³⁰⁷ There is such a significant opportunity for every Christian coach, volunteer or paid, to take up the mantle of honesty, lead the way, and expect their athletes to model this virtue as well. A final piece to the Spirit-led philosophy gets up close and personal.

Apprenticeship

In a day and age where sport is detrimentally competitive and coaching is boiled down to getting the best out of someone for personal gain, the concept of an apprenticing coach comes to us as a cool drink of water on a hot summer day. In an interview with high school football coach Matt Bane, his core conviction revolves around building

³⁰⁴ "Golden State Warriors Momentum Built on Team Chemistry and Offensive Onslaught For The 16-0 NBA Record," Movie News Guide, 2015, accessed April 26, 2016, <http://www.movienewsguide.com/golden-state-warriors-momentum-built-team-chemistry-offensive-onslaught-16-0-nba-record/123504>.

³⁰⁵ "Benjamin Franklin Quote," BrainyQuote, accessed April 27, 2016, <http://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/quotes/b/benjaminfr151625.html>.

³⁰⁶ "Corruption in Sport Initiative," Transparency International, accessed April 26, 2016, http://www.transparency.org/news/feature/sport_integrity.

³⁰⁷ "Spreading Corruption in Sports," *The New York Times*, 2016, accessed April 26, 2016, http://www.nytimes.com/2016/01/16/opinion/spreading-corruption-in-sports.html?_r=0.

leaders, not great athletes. He, along with many other Christian coaches, views his role as mightier than building a team who wins, but building into a group of young men who will do the same as they grow older. What coach Bane articulated is “apprenticeship,” the art of walking with a group or individual for the purpose of human development. The Latin term for “apprentice,” *apprendere/apprehendere*,³⁰⁸ pairs well with “μαθητής,” both pointing toward growth through following. One of the keys to understanding takes place by standing under,³⁰⁹ precisely what apprenticeship contains. We cannot dwindle discipleship down merely to the inhaling of information,³¹⁰ nor simply conducting a small group Bible study once a week. The Scriptures simply will not allow it. Some of the most famous words Jesus ever uttered have great implications for athletic coaches.

In non-classic rabbinical fashion, He called out to the unlikeliest of men to walk after³¹¹ and conspire with Him.³¹² This beckoning was not simply an invitation to *do* or *be* like Him. It was an opportunity for these men to discover what it meant to be truly human, who would go and “do likewise”³¹³ with others, inevitably setting off a chain reaction altering human history as we know it.³¹⁴ Jesus led and developed His disciples

³⁰⁸ Merriam-Webster.com, s.v. “apprentice,” accessed March 24, 2017, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/apprentice>.

³⁰⁹ Leonard I. Sweet, “Portland Seminary Zoom Chat” (lecture, November 14, 2016).

³¹⁰ Swanson, *Dictionary of Biblical Languages With Semantic Domains*.

³¹¹ Johannes P. Louw and Eugene Albert Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, 469.

³¹² Ronald T. Habermas, *The Complete Disciple: A Model for Cultivating God's Image in Us* (Colorado Springs, CO: NexGen, 2003), 23-24.

³¹³ Luke 10:37.

³¹⁴ Mark 1:16-20.

within the context of meaningful, authentic relationships.³¹⁵ This is exactly what it looks like to follow a rabbi in the ancient world and today. To be Jewish is to learn in community. As an itinerant rabbi, Jesus' disciples would have immersed themselves, not only in the teachings, but in the lifestyle of their teacher.³¹⁶ To walk after Jesus would not have been an easy road but a dangerous one filled with great sacrifice.³¹⁷ Truly, discipleship expands beyond mere impersonation and conformity.

All too often the word "discipleship" becomes watered down with imagery of mimes and mimics. In an effort to avoid such blunders, the word "apprenticeship" is more appealing for the Christian coach. This is not in opposition of discipleship but the very model Jesus used *to* disciple. His apprentices were drawn away from the trades they knew, to learn an entirely new one. The Spirit-led coach would benefit from following in the footsteps of Jesus' model, rather than the common "do as I say, not as I do" method, which hinders authentic apprenticeship and can often times be found in coaching.

Two examples are worth noting. Toward the beginning of the 2015 NCAA football season, the Atlantic Coast Conference (ACC) released their football media guide. At the bottom of the Wake Forest 2014 season recap, a sentence of an explicit nature was typed and the ACC immediately issued a statement of apology.³¹⁸ In the middle of a

³¹⁵ Jerry W. Payne, *Organic Disciple Development: Purposeful and Practical Mentoring as an Answer to Twentysomethings Leaving the Local Church in the Postmodern Context* (Newberg, OR: George Fox University, 2010), 94.

³¹⁶ Robby Gallaty, *Rediscovering Discipleship: Making Jesus' Final Words Our First Work* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2015), 28-30.

³¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 33-34; Luke 9:57-62.

³¹⁸ Brett Smiley, "ACC Apologizes for All-Caps Profanity Published in Football Media Guide," FOX Sports, July 21, 2015, accessed April 15, 2017, <http://www.foxsports.com/buzzer/story/acc-media-guide-vulgarity-oops-072115>.

timeout during the Buffalo Bills and New England Patriots football game, referee Pete Morelli slipped some profanity while forgetting to turn off his microphone.³¹⁹

Both incidents, and many others, inevitably create headlines, while profanity being used by coaches has been a largely subjective matter. Many coaches use it as a means of motivation, yet crack down on kids displaying it in the locker room and in everyday conversations. Some leagues have gone as far as to penalize the use of on field profanity, creating pushback from players *and* coaches.³²⁰ The use of profanity in coaching is one of many examples animating the unsaid rule of “do as I say, not as I do.” Overall, coaching as apprenticing seems to be lacking in sport and has been boiled down to a “talk to” rather than “walk with” posture. This is not how the ancients modeled teaching and training, especially when it came to the Jewish master/apprentice archetype. The following are Christian discipleship practices from several eras in history, applicable to the athletic coach today.

Teach. Study. Repeat. “And they submitted themselves to the Apostles teaching.”

One of the many characteristics which set Jewish people apart from their pagan neighbors, had to do with regimented study of the Torah.³²¹ This quality was viewed as

³¹⁹ Kevin Seifert and Mike Rodak, "NFL Referee Drops Profanity After Leaving Mic On During Timeout," ESPN, October 3, 2016, accessed April 15, 2017, http://www.espn.com/nfl/story/_/id/17695884/nfl-referee-pete-morelli-uses-profanity-leaving-microphone-new-england-patriots-buffalo-bills-game.

³²⁰ Steve Ohnesorge, "New Profanity Rules Have High School Coaches and Players Holding Their Tongues," WBTV, Channel 3 News, Weather, Traffic, August 24, 2016, accessed April 15, 2017, <http://www.wbtv.com/story/32834905/new-profanity-rules-have-high-school-coaches-and-players-holding-their-tongues>.

³²¹ Paul R. Spickard, Kevin M. Cragg, and G. William Carlson, *A Global History of Christians: How Everyday Believers Experienced Their World* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2008), 14.

honoring Yahweh at the highest level and continues today.³²² When young Jewish boys would graduate through their schooling, they were subject to a series of tests by the rabbi with the hope of an invitation to follow him.³²³ Without computers or many of the note taking devices of today, these boys would rigorously recite and repeat in order to understand the Holy Scriptures, older teachings, as well as newer ones.³²⁴ We have no reason to believe it was any different for the first century disciples and Christians. To be a disciple, was to soak up the teachings, study those teachings, and do it all over again the next day.

In the “Sermon on the Mount,” Christ demonstrates this very pattern. He lays down a series of newer teaching which would be memorized, recited, and passed along for centuries to come. Indeed, apprenticeship during the time of Jesus meant “to go with him, in an attitude of observation, study, obedience, and imitation.”³²⁵ The twelve learned how to do what they did by being with Jesus, the true mark of an apprentice. The Apostle Paul did the same with the famed rabbi Gamaliel,³²⁶ and would pass along his teachings and training to Timothy who would go on to build a great church in Ephesus. These are only a few examples of apprenticeship set in motion for today’s Christian coach. What are key teachings derived from Scripture he/she is wanting every athlete to ruminate on,

³²² Gallaty, 33.

³²³ Ibid., 33-34.

³²⁴ Ibid., 31.

³²⁵ Dallas Willard, *The Great Omission: Reclaiming Jesus's Essential Teachings on Discipleship* (New York, NY: HarperOne, an imprint of HarperCollinsPublishers, 2014), 6.

³²⁶ Gallaty, 34.

recite, and repeat? Every coach should liken themselves as rabbi's, uniquely positioned to pour themselves into those who are studying under them.

All of this is and should be marked by love. I will never forget my 6th grade Pop Warner football coach giving me a big hug, telling me he “loved me” after I was demoted to a lower age group because of my below average size. This came as a shock simply because coach never had anything nice to say, was constantly yelling, and refrained from any physical kindness toward his players. In other words, his actions and words did not match his final actions and words to me. For the Spirit-led coach to apprentice well, he/she cannot teach, train, and push their athletes void of visible love. The Roman Emperor Julian was a harsh critic of early Christians but could not escape the power their love toward one another and strangers held.³²⁷ Furthermore, early Church Father Tertullian, writing during a time of heavy Christian persecution, echoes this reality when he states “it is the deeds of a love so noble that lead many to put a brand upon us. ‘See,’ they say, ‘how they love one another.’”³²⁸ A coach who undergirds teaching and training in love, as exemplified by early followers of Jesus, will obtain an unmatched level of loyalty from his/her athletes.

Revivals and Small Group Meetings. In ancient Christian fashion, some of the greatest revivals taking place after the Reformation began with response to biblical teaching and repentance. Pulpit and open air preaching from the likes of John Wesley, Jonathan Edwards, and George Whitfield drew crowds up to tens of thousands. The Great

³²⁷ John Piper, *A Godward Life: Seeing the Supremacy of God in All of Life: 120 Daily Meditations* (Colorado Springs, CO: Multnomah Books, 2015), 253.

³²⁸ Mike Aquilina, *The Fathers of the Church: An Introduction to the First Christian Teachers* (Huntington, IN: Our Sunday Visitor, 2013), 95.

Awakening was not just a temporary move of the Spirit but a social and cultural phenomenon extending far beyond its time and place.³²⁹ During this time period, Moravian Pietists including August Francke and Count Nikolaus von Zinzendorf saw it as their responsibility to build orphanages, print children's literature, and travel all over the world converting many, including John and Charles Wesley.³³⁰ A couple centuries later, the Holy Spirit would hit Wales powerfully behind a traveling preacher named Evan Roberts. Though Roberts would not announce the time and location a meeting would take place until a couple of days in advance, thousands would show up even if the preacher did not preach.³³¹ Within the framework of revivals, openness and interest in the Person and work of the Holy Spirit were high, fueling spiritual experiences and the evangelizing of many.³³² For early Pentecostals especially, motivated by the Great Commission to "...preach the gospel to all creation," there was a conviction to see Spirit baptism spread like a wild fire all over the world.³³³

³²⁹ Dale T. Irvin and Scott W. Sunquist, *History of the World Christian Movement: Modern Christianity from 1454 to 1800*, vol. 2 (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2012), 438.

³³⁰ Collin Hansen and John Woodbridge, *God-Sized Vision: Revival Stories that Stretch and Stir* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2015), 43-44.

³³¹ James A. Stewart, *Invasion of Wales by the Spirit through Evan Roberts* (Fort Washington, PA: Christian Literature Crusade, 1963), 11.

³³² Gary B. McGee, Gary B. "Miracles and Mission Revisited," *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 25, no. 4 (2001): 148.
<https://georgefox.idm.oclc.org/login?url=http://search.proquest.com.georgefox.idm.oclc.org/docview/216007054?accountid=11085>.

³³³ A. Anderson, "Spreading fires: The Globalization of Pentecostalism in the Twentieth Century." *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 31, no. 1 (2007), 8.
<https://georgefox.idm.oclc.org/login?url=http://search.proquest.com.georgefox.idm.oclc.org/docview/216013885?accountid=11085>.

Much of the preaching, teaching, and theological prowess of these revivalists and others like them come as no surprise, however, what did apprenticeship look like? After hearing a sermon from George Whitfield in 1740, Sarah Osborne would go on to organize a small group Bible study meeting in her home for women. Eventually, this “small” meeting would attract men and children, slaves and free persons, growing to a weekly attendance of roughly five hundred people.³³⁴ John Wesley, replicating Dr. Anton Horneck and other religious society’s model for discipleship, formed The Holy Club. In these small group gatherings, spiritual topics and biblical themes were informally discussed with a prompt to action.³³⁵ The Welsh Revival of 1904 began with young men and women gathering together, confessing, and asking the Holy Spirit to move deeply,³³⁶ while the great *Prayer Meeting Revival* began with a group of six businessmen praying during their one-hour lunch break in September 1857.³³⁷ Many of the revivals and Pentecostal movements owe their existence to these types of meetings, where men and women voluntarily gathered together for prayer, discussion, and encouragement, spurring a cataclysmic movement of the Spirit.

The emphasis of these experiences is on *gathering*, surfacing a human ache to belong. Joseph Meyers correctly asserts our culture is confused when it comes to belonging, and the Christian coach has a tremendous opportunity to curb the confusion.³³⁸

³³⁴ Irvin and Sunquist, 440.

³³⁵ Michael D. Henderson, *John Wesley’s Class Meeting: A Model for Adoption* (Napanea, IL: Evangel Publishing House, 1997), 43.

³³⁶ Hansen and Woodbridge, 80-81.

³³⁷ *Ibid.*, 101.

³³⁸ Joseph R. Myers, *The Search to Belong: Rethinking Intimacy, Community, and Small Groups* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2003), 6.

Revivals and awakenings demonstrate the power of the Spirit's cross-cultural stretch, which usually begins within a smaller group meeting. Spirit-led coaches, similar to early preachers and revivalists, would benefit from investing in athletes within smaller groups, enabling athletes a “behind the scenes” peek at who they are once the coaching cap gets hung up in the closet. Truly, “The quality of our souls will indelibly touch others for good or for ill.”³³⁹ The “do as I say...” model has no place for coaches positioned to help athletes belong long before they believe.³⁴⁰

³³⁹ Willard, 124.

³⁴⁰ Myers, 6.

SECTION IV: ARTIFACT DESCRIPTION

Within the contents of this dissertation there is an emphasis on placing the Spirit at the center, margins, and everywhere in between our coaching philosophies. It will take an alternative approach to implement an alternative approach to coaching. Much of the training in camps and coaching clinics is results-based—sharpening strength, skills and abilities, learning new techniques for the purpose of increasing a winning percentage. Coaching clinics, as beneficial as they can be, tend to lean toward transactional methods in sport where the learning format can be sit-and-hear from the experts, take notes, and educate with the intention of making the coach a winner. As obvious and conventional as strategy is, a Spirit-led approach comes from an unconventional perspective. Therefore, the artifact of my dissertation project is a Pneumanautical one.³⁴¹

Rather than a coaching clinic, I have crafted *Activate: A Coaching Advance* designed for any coach claiming to follow Jesus, taking coaches on a ride with the Spirit. A “clinic” is where someone goes when they need physical, mental, emotional, etc. treatment or repair. An “advance” is a call to action and forward motion within the Kingdom of God. What stands out in a coaching advance is the fixation on scenario thinking, taken in courses around the table. Len Sweet exposes the foolishness of making plans rather than being prepared, simply because anything that can happen will happen. Therefore, a coaching advance offers a tool-belt helping coaches improvise in the face of change while staying true to mission, atmosphere, and apprenticeship. Each coach will

³⁴¹ One who takes a ride with the Spirit. This term came about during a conversation with my secondary advisor, David Phillips.

learn to trust the Holy Spirit and lean into His future-charting aptness. In addition to six courses around the table, over the course of two days, each coach will receive a *Spirit Led Coaching Playbook* at the end of the advance. Specifics are in the following section.

SECTION V: ARTIFACT SPECIFICATION

What: *Activate: A Coaching Advance*, designed to activate the coach's senses with the intent of paying attention to what the Spirit is actively doing in their athletes and around their team. The goal is to help each coach think differently about their role; as someone on mission with Holy Spirit to cultivate a healthy atmosphere while apprenticing young men and women, boys and girls. The advance will be peppered with time to relax and connect, teaching on Spirit led principles, and the story of Scripture.

When: This will take place from a Friday night dinner to a Sunday afternoon lunch, over six meals. Two meals each will be dedicated to the three main areas of a Spirit led coach: Witness, Atmosphere, and Apprenticeship.

Where: Preferably a house on the Oregon coast, which offers beautiful scenery, a variety of smells, unique tastes, and serene sounds, affording opportunity to hear the Spirit speak clearly. Each advance will cap out at ten coaches and cost approximately \$500. This would cover lodging cost, meals, and all materials, which includes a "playbook."

The Spirit-Led Coaching Playbook is designed to help guide coaches throughout the season. This interactive playbook will give weekly stimulation, quickening the mind and heart to act in accordance with Holy Spirit. A stimulant is *temporarily quickening some vital process or functional activity*.³⁴² Too often we are caught up in motivating or inspiring people, without seeing action as a result. A stimulant is deeper than inspiration

³⁴² <http://www.dictionary.com/browse/stimulant?s=t>.

or motivation, since action is woven within its very function. Within the playbook are three main sections or tools, accompanied by approximately seven stimulants each.

The playbook is compiled in such a way that each Spirit led coach can take a stimulant per week, allowing it to be a point of focus. However, coaches can spend as much or as little time as desired on each stimulant. Every stimulant is purposed to help coaches think differently, Pneumanautically, about their athletes, with a stir toward action; to inspire a coach toward thinking and acting in a way that aligns with a Spirit led approach to coaching. Each one will have a couple of Scriptures, at least one image, a quote, and a challenging series of thoughts and questions with space to interact. The booklet will have the following:

TABLE OF STIMULANTS

Explanation of Metaphor/Terms:

Witness, Atmosphere, & Apprenticeship

Giveaway

Preface: Utilizing the Playbook

A Word for Coaches: Explanation of a “stimulant”

Stimulants:

SECTION I: WITNESS

SECTION II: ATMOSPHERE

SECTION III: APPRENTICESHIP

BEGINNING

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This pocket-sized playbook will be the physical artifact, completely designed and laid out professionally. After the encouragement of several coaches and mentors, there is a real possibility this artifact will morph into a future popular book. *Activate: A Coaching Advance* will be fleshed out at a later date.

SECTION VI: POSTSCRIPT

On the outset of this academic journey, I was convinced to research and write on the double-edged sword of apprenticeship and discipleship within and outside of local church buildings. The concept of melding athletics into *missio dei* was nowhere in the same zip code of my mind. Before the coffee smell settled into my clothing at our very first advance, two of cohort SFS14's three advisors had influenced the direction this project took considerably. Leonard Sweet, along with several great men, has re-signed my thinking of mission, apprenticeship, and atmosphere cultivation through a lens of semiotics. My beautiful wife is tired of hearing the words from my mouth: "I just see things so differently than a few years ago."

As the process inched forward, it became apparent this thesis was becoming a product of my own discontent within coaching. Throughout my life, I would consider myself to be the typical follower of Jesus who is, nearly, obsessed with athletics. I have played four different sports competitively, refereed and coached, and continue to be a loyal fan, loving each opportunity graced to me by the Holy Spirit to do so. However, stories of poor coaching continue to make headlines locally and nationally, and it seemed we are more interested in treating symptoms rather than the root issues; roots give way to fruit.

The project ended up dabbling in the deeper recesses of coaching by exploring motives, virtue, and Holy Spirit guidance over strategies, systems, and leadership. The former deals with roots and the later deals with symptoms. As a pastor within a healthy local church, the heartbeat behind each line in this thesis is transferability. Any minister, teacher, administrator, and coach can pick through the pages and apply principles in their

context whatever it may be. For too long many in the American church struggle to stay on mission, cultivate healthy atmospheres, and make disciples who make disciples. This is a privilege and responsibility given every follower of Jesus, by the power of the Spirit, no matter the occupation.

ARTIFACT

TABLE OF STIMULANTS

A Spirit Led Coaching Philosophy

Explanation of Tools

Witness, Atmosphere, & Apprenticeship

Giveaway

Preface: Utilizing the Playbook

A Word for Coaches: Explanation of a “stimulant”

Stimulants:

SECTION I: WITNESS

Tongues

Breathe

Diversity

Unity

Voice

Silence

World

SECTION II: ATMOSPHERE

Conviction

Confession

Comfortable

Uncomfortable

Rumination

Anticipation

Fruit

Perseverance

Rest

SECTION III: APPRENTICESHIP

Table/Tischreden

Walk

Hear

Compassion

Margins & Edges

Wrestle

Dance

BEGINNING

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Spirit Led Coaching Philosophy

A Spirit-led coaching philosophy commissions coaches to nudge athletes in the direction where Creator God is already active. As King David famously put it, “Search me, O God, and know my heart! Try me and know my thoughts! And see if there be any grievous way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.” What occurs when a person comes face to face with the reality of their own incompetence to properly lead

themselves? Followers of Jesus can only fully trust their Creator, as we are so often dictated by our sinful nature. A Christian coach, no matter the level of athletic competition, recognizes his/her submission to a greater Power than their own heart. A Spirit-led coach veers away from emphasis on self-help and result-oriented philosophies, paying attention to what the Spirit is doing in the lives of those they are privileged coach. The Spirit-led coaching philosophy determines a coach's responsibility is not merely to make a child a better person, but help athletes recognize who they are created to be. A common temptation for all coaches is to attract attention rather than pay attention. As Leonard Sweet so brilliantly states in his book *Nudge*, "Our quest is to be so filled with the Spirit of God and to be wearing interpretive Jesus goggles, that we not only notice, but are able to interpret and respond." This is the difference-maker when it comes to human hardwiring for connection. This is where a Spirit-led philosophy differs drastically from much of what we see in the sport world today. This coaching approach does not focus on wins and losses, X's and O's, but the activity of Holy Spirit.

Explanation of Tools

Witness: Every coach is a disciple-maker. Every coach is privileged to partner with the Holy Spirit on mission to make disciples.

Atmosphere: We sub-create with the Creator a desirable team culture or environment. The Spirit is directly involved in this cultivation. Culture is formed whether we are intentional or not.

Apprenticeship: Each coach has been given opportunity for leading athletes a little closer to Jesus; walking with a team of individuals as Jesus did with His disciples and as the Spirit does with every follower today.

Giveaway: Rather than have a "takeaway" from each "stimulant," I challenge coaches to give away what they are learning. To take away is within itself, individualistic. To give away is communal.

Preface: Utilizing the Playbook

This playbook is compiled in such a way that each Spirit led coach can take a stimulant per week, allowing it to be a point of focus throughout. However, coaches are free to spend as much or as little time as desired on each stimulant. Every stimulant is purposed to help coaches think differently, Pneumanautically (taking a ride with the Spirit), about their athletes, with a stir toward action; to inspire a coach toward thinking and acting in ways which align with a Spirit led approach to coaching. Each metaphor has a couple of Scriptures, at least one image, a quote, and a challenging series of thoughts and questions with space to interact. A coach can memorize a Scripture each week, use the quote as a point of team motivation, pull in other coaches and work through the "giveaway" together as a staff, etc.

A Word for Coaches

stim·u·lant (adj.): *temporarily quickening some vital process or functional activity*, according to dictionary.com. Too often we are caught up in motivating or inspiring people, without seeing action as a result. A stimulant is deeper than inspiration or motivation, since action is woven within its very function. Therefore, this little playbook is designed to give weekly stimulation, quickening the mind and heart to act in

accordance with the Holy Spirit. Each section has a series of stimulants to, yes, encourage and inspire, but more importantly stir toward action. Take as much or little time as you would like on each stimulant. They are designed to get a coach thinking and acting in a way that aligns with a Spirit led approach to coaching. Athletes will only benefit from you ruminating over this playbook. May the Spirit move in such a way you cannot help but participate with Him. Grace and peace.
—Sean Silverii. Albany, Oregon. November 19, 2017.

SECTION I: WITNESS

Advancing the Kingdom is the *primary* focus of all disciples of Jesus. A disciple is commissioned to use and utilize all they have gained and been given for the purpose of witness. A Christian coach who does not see themselves as a disciple-maker, has failed to sense the gravity of Jesus' words. Each coach is automatically baptized into a mission-oriented faith, which is marked by what could and should happen, just as much as by what has been and at one point took place. Witness does not always entail words, but a lifestyle which points to the life-giver. The following stimulants specialize in this.

Tongues

“And divided tongues as of fire appeared to them and rested on each one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance.” —Acts 2:3-4

“If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal.” —1 Cor. 13:1

“With it we bless our Lord and Father, and with it we curse people who are made in the likeness of God. From the same mouth come blessing and cursing. My brothers,[c] these things ought not to be so.” —James 3:9-10

“What good does it do to speak in tongues on Sunday if you have been using your tongue during the week to curse and gossip?” —Leonard Ravenhill (English evangelist and author, 1907-1994)

Is your speech a noisy gong? What is one way to remedy or prevent this?

Giveaway:

The gift of tongues is useless without love, which is a primary marker of every disciple. Speech will either point toward Jesus or toward something other; the tongue will enhance or damage witness. What is a phrase or two, a few words you can use periodically to infuse courage, inspiration, and confidence in the team? Write down two or three words

that rolls off the tongue and are received well by your team. This week attempt to use these phrases and single words amidst difficult/frustrating times.

Breathe

“When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord. Jesus said to them again, ‘Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you.’ And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, ‘Receive the Holy Spirit.’” —Jesus in John 20:20-22

“then the Lord God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature.” —Genesis 2:7

“Ideas are the mightiest influence on earth. One great thought breathed into a man may regenerate him.” —William Ellery Channing (American preacher, 1780-1842)

What are you *breathing in* to your athletes?

Giveaway:

Look for ways you can *breath life* into an athlete this week. During practice, in the middle of a huddle, before and/or after the game, allow the Holy Spirit to bring to your attention a couple of players who need an extra breath from you. This is “witness” (obedience to Jesus’ commission) at work on the ground level. Who are the 2 to 3 athletes the Spirit is bringing to your attention this week? What specifically are you breathing in to them this week?

What is the Holy Spirit saying/doing?

Diversity

“Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who empowers them all in everyone. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.”

—1 Corinthians 12:4-7

“Variety’s the very spice of life. That gives it all its flavor.”

—William Cowper (English poet, 1731-1800)

dis·cern·ment: the quality of being able to grasp and comprehend what is obscure.

Are you utilizing each athlete’s gifts? Does your roster look stale or contain variety?

Giveaway:

Diversity only strengthens witness. To be diverse is to reflect the Kingdom. This week, evaluate and assess each athlete’s gifts and abilities. Discern what the Spirit is doing. Are there positions in need of shifting? Is an athlete better suited somewhere else? Is there someone on the bench who needs a second stab at starting? Record your findings below.

Unity

“Does he who supplies the Spirit to you and works miracles among you do so by works of the law, or by hearing with faith—for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.” —Galatians 3:5, 26-28

“I can do things you cannot. You can do things I cannot; together we can do great things.”

—Mother Teresa (Catholic nun and missionary, 1910-1997)

Is there division or divisiveness taking place within the team? If so, in what ways?

Giveaway:

There is *unity* within the *diversity* of the Trinity. The Holy Spirit beckons us to be one, which includes athletics; we truly are stronger together. Name two or three ways you can promote unity within the team. In addition, what is one action to take to squash any possible division. It could be a tough conversation, benching a starter, speaking with a parent, or even placing a player or two on leave for a series of games.

Voice

“And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters...And God said, “Let there be light,” and there was light.” —Genesis 1:1-2

—Marcus Tullius Cicero (Roman politician, 106 BC-43 BC)

Are you silent long enough to hear? If not, why?

Giveaway:

Hearing is just as powerful as speaking. Only within the silence can we discern the whispers of the Holy Spirit. Take some time this week to be silent before the Spirit. What is He saying to you? Record what you hear below.

World

“And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.” —God, in Genesis 12:2-3

“Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.” —Jesus, Matthew 28:19-20

“The Great Commission is not an option to be considered; it is a command to be obeyed.”

—Hudson Taylor (Missionary to China, 1832-1905)

ethnos: ethnicities, nations;
people groups.

Does your heart break for the nations? Which nations or ethnic/people groups?

Giveaway:

The priority and privilege of every disciple of Jesus is to make disciples, which includes athletes. Witness does not always entail a stage and audience. A simply, subtle nudge will do—paying attention to what the Spirit is already doing in the lives of one another, and pointing out whatever it may be. Who are two or three athletes ready to be nudged this week? What does it look like for you to “nudge” them? How can you make yourself available this week for potential “nudging” conversations? What would be a beneficial ethnic experience for the team to participate in?

SECTION II: ATMOSPHERE

The Church is not the only “organization” to struggle with change and creating healthy atmospheres to maximize performance. This is especially true when it comes to management and leadership of sports teams. It is my belief that coaches, by partnering with the Holy Spirit, can be preemptive and avoid many downfalls accompanied by a lack of atmosphere cultivation. The following stimulants may double as virtues, aiding in a Spirit-driven culture.

Confession

“But a man named Ananias, with his wife Sapphira, sold a piece of property, and with his wife's knowledge he kept back for himself some of the proceeds and brought only a part of it and laid it at the apostles' feet. But Peter said, ‘Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and to keep back for yourself part of the proceeds of the land?’ ... When Ananias heard these words, he fell down and breathed his last... Now many signs and wonders were regularly done among the people by the hands of the apostles.” —Acts 5:1-3, 5 and 12

“Then Joshua said to Achan, ‘My son, give glory to the Lord, the God of Israel, by telling the truth. Make your confession and tell me what you have done. Don’t hide it from me.’”
—Joshua 7:19

An open confession is good for the soul.” —Scottish Proverb

It begins with the coach: why is open confession difficult or easy?

Giveaway:

Confession plays a part in shaping us into the humans we were meant to be. “Fessing-up” makes way for the Spirit to do His work in, through, and around the team. This is a key virtue to cultivating healthy atmospheres. What is something you need to confess to Jesus? Out loud, to the team? Is there something you need to ask forgiveness of? Spend a few moments praying over Psalm 139:23-24; write down your confession and specify the time you will confess out loud.

Comfortable

“When doubts filled my mind, your comfort gave me renewed hope and cheer.” — Psalm 94:19

“But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you.” —Jesus, in John 14:26

paraklētōs: called to one’s aid.
Advocate, intercessor, comforter.

“The worst loneliness is not to be comfortable with yourself.”

—Mark Twain (American writer, 1835-1910)

Are your athletes comfortable to be themselves around you? To ask questions, to contribute their own ideas, etc.? Why or why not?

Giveaway:

Comfortability for the right reasons can be a powerful stimulant. Jesus ties the Holy Spirit who comforts, encourages, and advocates, as the source for teaching and training. What is one or two ways you can cultivate an atmosphere that is comfortable for the right reasons? Does your team need to have a little fun? Do your athletes need to see a little vulnerability from their coaches? Are there some questions needing to be asked? What is one or two ways you can encourage those athletes who are disciples of Jesus, to be comfortable sharing their faith with teammates?

Uncomfortable

“One day Jesus said to his disciples, ‘Let’s cross to the other side of the lake.’ So they got into a boat and started out. As they sailed across, Jesus settled down for a nap. But soon a fierce storm came down on the lake. The boat was filling with water, and they were in real danger. The disciples went and woke him up, shouting, ‘Master, Master, we’re going to drown!’ When Jesus woke up, he rebuked the wind and the raging waves. Suddenly the storm stopped and all was calm. Then he asked them, ‘Where is your faith?’ The disciples were terrified and amazed.”

—Luke 8:22-25

“Life begins at the end of your comfort zone.” —Neale Donald Walsch (American author, 1943-)

What does it mean and look like for athletes to be uncomfortable for the wrong reasons?

Giveaway:

The Spirit sometimes beckons us to new heights of discomfort. Being uncomfortable for the right reasons, pushes athletes to levels of growth otherwise not achieved had we stayed comfortably stationary. Pay attention to the Holy Spirit: Who are two or three athlete's you need to "push to the edge" this week? How will you do this, without breaking their will?

Rumination

"Therefore my spirit faints within me; my heart within me is appalled. I remember the days of old; I meditate on all that you have done; I ponder the work of your hands." — Psalm 143:4-5

"Then Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan River. He was led by the Spirit in the wilderness, where he was tempted by the devil for forty days. Jesus ate nothing all that time and became very hungry. Then the devil said to him, 'If you are the Son of God, tell this stone to become a loaf of bread.' But Jesus told him, 'No! The Scriptures say, 'People do not live by bread alone.'" — Luke 4:1-4

"Master, I don't think you quite realize what you got here! So, why don't you ruminate, whilst I illuminate the possibilities." — Genie from *Aladdin*

What specific Scriptures are you currently ruminating on?

Giveaway:

Remembering and attentiveness is a powerful virtue. What is one or two things the Holy Spirit has brought to your attention that you can keep before your team to ruminate or meditate on? What are some victories or good lessons learned in the past your athlete's need to remember and meditate on this week...something miraculous, unexpected, exhilarating, dismissive yet profound, or easily overlooked?

Anticipation

“Then when they arrived at Capernaum the Temple tax-collectors came up and said to Peter, ‘Your master doesn’t pay Temple-tax, we presume?’ ‘Oh, yes, he does!’ replied Peter. Later when he went into the house Jesus anticipated what he was going to say.” — Matthew 17:24-25

“And they went through the region of Phrygia and Galatia, having been forbidden by the Holy Spirit to speak the word in Asia. And when they had come up to Mysia, they attempted to go into Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus did not allow them. So, passing by Mysia, they went down to Troas. And a vision appeared to Paul in the night: a man of Macedonia was standing there, urging him and saying, ‘Come over to Macedonia and help us.’ And when Paul had seen the vision, immediately we sought to go on into Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel to them.” —Acts 16:6-10

“Anticipation is the heart of wisdom. If you are going to cross a desert, you anticipate that you will be thirsty, and you take water.” —Mark Helprin (American novelist and journalist 1947-)

What are you anticipating this week, good or bad?

Giveaway:

This virtue, especially, must be *caught* much more than *taught*. The Spirit's fruit gives a great footing for shaping atmosphere—how can you weave the fruit into your teams DNA? Weekly rewards to those athlete's who demonstrate the fruit? Notes to players who personify the fruit? The Spirit's fruit written down and posted in strategic spaces, such as on lockers?

Perseverance

“Whenever Moses held up his hand, Israel prevailed, and whenever he lowered his hand, Amalek prevailed. But Moses' hands grew weary, so they took a stone and put it under him, and he sat on it, while Aaron and Hur held up his hands, one on one side, and the other on the other side. So his hands were steady until the going down of the sun.” — Exodus 17:11-12

“Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words. And he who searches hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.” —Romans 8:26-27

“By perseverance the snail reached the ark.” —Charles H. Spurgeon (English preacher, 1834-1892)

proskarterēsis: persistence; devotion; to devote oneself to.

to continue to do something with intense effort, with the possible implication of despite difficulty

Giveaway:

As the Holy Spirit works in and through good, bad, undesirable, and desirable circumstances, what does it look like for you to partner with Him in developing perseverance in each athlete?

Rest

“And on the seventh day God finished his work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all his work that he had done. So God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it God rested from all his work that he had done in creation.”
—Genesis 2:2-3

“Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.”—Jesus, in Matthew 11:29

“Take rest; a field that has rested gives a bountiful crop.” —Ovid (Ancient Roman classical Poet and Author of Metamorphoses, 43 BC-17 AD)

Are you taking a day of rest each week during the season? Why are you or why have you not?

Giveaway:

An easily overlooked virtue within atmosphere cultivation, rest and *fresh* go hand in hand. What are a few rest ideas you can implement periodically? A random day off from practice or educationally fun team trip as a substitute for practice? Pay attention to the Spirit: which athlete(s) need a little extra rest? Do they need some time off from practice or a little less playing time? Give an opportunity this week for spontaneous rest.

SECTION III: APPRENTICESHIP

Apprenticeship (Latin, *apprendere/apprehendere*): the art of walking with a group or individual for the purpose of human development. In a day and age where sport is detrimentally competitive and coaching is boiled down to getting the best out of someone for personal gain, the concept of an apprenticing coach comes as a cool drink of water on a hot summer day. The following stimulants are metaphors which animate this very art established by our Master, under the influence of the Spirit.

Table/Tischreden

“And Levi made him a great feast in his house, and there was a large company of tax collectors and others reclining at table with them.”—Luke 5:29

“And David said to him, ‘Do not fear, for I will show you kindness for the sake of your father Jonathan, and I will restore to you all the land of Saul your father, and you shall eat at my table always...And you and your sons and your servants shall till the land for him and shall bring in the produce, that your master's grandson may have bread to eat. But Mephibosheth your master's grandson shall always eat at my table.’ ...So Mephibosheth ate at David's table, like one of the king's sons.” —2 Samuel 9:7, 10-11

“A strong family has well-worn seats at the dinner table.” —Unknown

Tischreden (Table talk): a collection of Martin Luther's sayings around the dinner table at Lutherhaus, Luther's home, but also at other times and locations, such as walks in the garden or notes taken while on journeys.

Do you utilize your table for the purpose of expanding the Kingdom of God? Why or why not?

Giveaway:

The table is one of the most palpable stimulants and metaphors for apprenticing. How can you uniquely utilize and implement the table or “table talk” each week? Is it a weekly team dinner? How about pulling a table out at the end of a practice and with no agenda, serve your team food and conversation? Who is one player or coach you can invite to your table once a month? Write down names and potential dates for table talk.

Walk

“Enoch walked with God after he fathered Methuselah 300 years and had other sons and daughters. Enoch walked with God, and he was not, for God took him.”

—Genesis 5:22-24

“He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?” —Micah 6:8

“While walking by the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon (who is called Peter) and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea, for they were fishermen. And he said to them, ‘Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.’” —Jesus, in Matthew 4:18-19

“If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together.” —African proverb

Giveaway:

As young Jewish boys would closely follow the footsteps of their Rabbi, coaches have opportunity to walk alongside their team. Who are the two to four athletes you will commit to walk closely with over the course of the next year? Do not make the obvious choice...listen to the Holy Spirit. Who does He bring to mind? What will it look like to “walk” with these individuals? Can you incorporate the table? If so, how?

Hear

“Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.”—Deuteronomy 6:4-5

“And he said, ‘He who has ears to hear, let him hear.’” —Mark 4:9

“The quieter you become, the more you can hear”
—Ram Dass (American spiritual teacher, 1931-)

šā-mă (shama): Take head, pay attention, hear.

Believe information and respond on the basis of having heard.

Hearing was directly tied to action. If one did not act, he/she did not actually hear.

Giveaway:

It is far too easy for coaches to listen to athletes but not actually *hear* them. In the fast-paced world of sports, hearing is becoming a more precious virtue. Are you paying attention to the Spirit? What is an activity or two you can implement personally to grow in the area of hearing, for the benefit of the team? What are some creative ways you can hear what is going through your athletes’ minds?

Compassion

“Kind words are like honey—sweet to the soul and healthy for the body.” —Proverbs 11:17

“When he went ashore he saw a great crowd, and he had compassion on them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd. And he began to teach them many things.” — Mark 6:34

“By compassion we make others’s misery our own, and so, by relieving them, we relieve ourselves also.” —Thomas Browne Sr. (English doctor and writer, 1605-1682)

Giveaway:

Care, kindness, and compassion are essentials to apprenticing athletes. Compassion is food for both the soul who receives and the one who gives it. Do you truly care for each individual on the team, regardless of performance or lack thereof? If not, what action(s) can you put into place to change that? What are one or two ways you can demonstrate your care and compassion this week? Pay attention to the Spirit—who needs an extra dose of kindness and compassion? How can you give it to them?

Margins & Edges

“And the Pharisees and their scribes grumbled at his disciples, saying, ‘Why do you eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners?’ And Jesus answered them, ‘Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. I have not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance.’” —Luke 5:31-32

“And he had to pass through Samaria.” —John 4:4

“I want to stand as close to the edge as I can without going over. Out on the edge, you see all the kinds of things you can’t see from the center.” —Kurt Vonnegut (American writer, 1922-2007)

Giveaway:

The Holy Spirit is alive and active, in the most unexpected of ways, out on the margins and edges of individual athletes, whether we recognize it or not. Personalize a prayer of participation, asking the Spirit to bring to your attention His work out on the edges and margins of each athlete, that might otherwise be easily missed. Think of this as writing a personal Psalm:

Dance

“And David danced before the Lord with all his might. And David was wearing a linen ephod. So David and all the house of Israel brought up the ark of the Lord with shouting and with the sound of the horn.” —2 Samuel 6:14-15

“A large crowd followed him, and he healed all who were ill... This was to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet Isaiah: ‘Here is my servant whom I have chosen, the one I love, in whom I delight; I will put my Spirit on him, and he will proclaim justice to the nations.’”

—Matthew 12:15-18

“Think of the magic of that foot, comparatively small, upon which your whole weight rests. It's a miracle, and the dance...is a celebration of that miracle.” —Martha Washington (American First Lady (1789-97) and wife of George Washington, 1732-1802)

What is your favorite soundtrack to dance to and why?

Giveaway:

Relationship is a dance and dancing is almost always associated with joy and celebration; equated with connection on deeper levels. Where do you need to be vulnerable and open up to those you are apprenticing? What is one or two ways you can celebrate with the team, win or lose, this week? Listen to the guidance and whisper of the Holy Spirit: Which athlete(s) can you show delight in? In what way(s), public and private?

BEGINNING

The rest remains to be written by you, the coach. Every off-season is the beginning of a new season. Every final game gives way to the beginning of a new game.

Each conclusion is a beginning. The Spirit is always beginning and continuing. May your life be led and empowered by Him, inspired toward *witness*, *atmosphere*, and *apprenticeship*. I pray this playbook is merely the beginning of all the Spirit brings to your attention day in and day out.

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