03 - SPORTS & RELIGION: VALUES ATTRIBUTED BY PASTORS AND WORKERS OF THE ASSEMBLY OF GOD – OURO FINO MINISTRY, RIO DE JANEIRO (RJ)

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INTRODUCTION

Physical education has undergone various methodologies, conflicts, concepts, projects, interests and guidelines in society's diverse environments. In the last years, this field of education has sought to reflect on aspects linked to studies and forms of developing this practice.

During a good part of the decade of the 1980s and 1990s, we underwent a period that came to be known as the physical education crisis. In his famous book A educação física cuida do corpo... e 'mente' [Physical education takes care of the body... and 'mind'], Medina (1983) points out that education did not use to care for the body in a deceitful manner. To Medina, we do not in fact have a body. We are a body that is simultaneously moving, thinking and feeling. This scholar deflagrates the crisis of physical education when stating that it used to merely train the body in the sense of domesticating it. In this way, this study seeks to examine the methodological alternatives for analyzing the body that were discovered during and after the period of the physical education crisis.

In the theological vision of the Christian religious leaders, the human body must be irreprehensible as it is the temple of the Holy Spirit. The importance and zeal that one must have with it are justified, since there is an extreme connection to be understood between the body and the Holy Spirit. Hence, we need to keep our physical body well conditioned in order to exist a balanced relationship between body and mind.

In addition, sports enable us to execute body movements that aim at developing motor skills that, in turn, bring us positive results in our lives, whether as a simple sports practice or as a high-performance sport. After these considerations, we ask the following: What values are attributed to sports, in this century, according to the vision of the pastors and workers of the Assembly of God – Ouro Fino Ministry, Rio de Janeiro?

When studying the body within the sports context, we observe that it is the same body that feeds on natural foods, that needs to move itself in order to develop physical skills and aptitudes, because without it we would be unperceivable beings, the body being important for one another's relationships. Thus, this study's objective is to identify the values attributed to sports, in this century, according to the vision of the pastors and workers of the Assembly of God – Ouro Fino Ministry, Rio de Janeiro.

The motive for which this theme was chosen came from many queries concerning the impact that sports can have on modern society, by means of the values attributed to sports today, according to the vision of the pastors and workers of the Assembly of God – Ouro Fino Ministry. Since we encountered difficulties in finding bibliographical references relating to the theme under discussion, this study is justified as a better identification of how sports can contribute to the social life of the Christian individual attending the Assembly of God – Ouro Fino Ministry /RJ.

METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

Initially, a bibliographic study was conducted, aiming at collecting information and data concerning the theme under discussion. We thus touched on themes such as Christian Religion; the Training of Leaders in Latin America; What Sports Is and What Value Sports has in Modern Society; The Body and the Temple of the Holy Spirit; Health for Practicing the Ministry; Physical Activity not only Helps the Body, but also the Mind; Sports as a Developer of Character and an Instrument of Evangelism. Later, we conducted an exploratory study, using a questionnaire prepared with open questions (previously endorsed by professors specializing in the Physical Education area) containing test words (stimulus-words per C.G. Jung) for Word Association. This method is defended by Cunha (2012); it seeks to identify concepts within the social imaginary of these religious players based on the first three words that come to mind, investigating the body's relationship with the practice of sports. The questionnaire was given to nine members of the Assembly of God – Ouro Fino Ministry, in Nova Iguaçu, Rio de Janeiro. After obtaining this information, we were able to prepare the study.

ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

Our field research enjoyed the participation of nine members of the Assembly of God – Ouro Fino Ministry, RJ; namely, one pastor, two presbyters, three deacons, one deaconess and two research assistants. Initially, we requested the participants to use Word Association, that is, to list three words that come to mind when concentrating on the test words body and sports. Next, there were questions to be answered with a yes or no, always explaining the answers. As one can see in the tables below, some people did not list three words:

When you think about the BODY, what comes to mind?

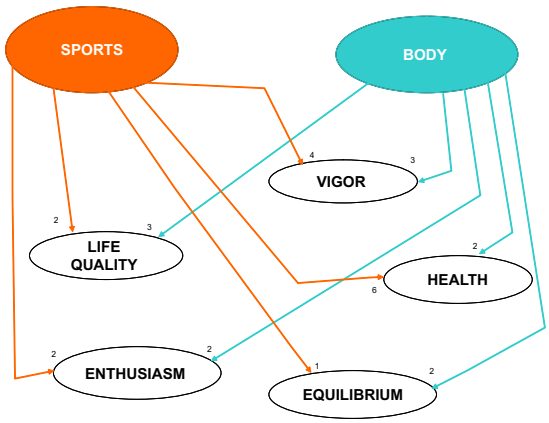
Words listed	Number of times
Parts of the Body	7
Life Quality	**3**
Vigor	**3**
Health	**2**
Enthusiasm	**2**
Equilibrium	2
Movement	**2**
Rest	1
Creature	1
Matter	1
Temple	1

When you think about SPORTS, what comes to mind?

Words listed	Number of times
Health	**6**
Vigor	**4**
Soccer / Swimming	3
Communion	2
Leisure	2
Enthusiasm	**2**
Life Quality	**2**
Equilibrium	**1**

It is interesting to note how these nine members were able to make an analogy between the Body and Sports. This becomes evident when analyzing which answers were given by members of the Assembly of God – Ouro Fino Ministry, RJ, when asked about such subjects. We observed that the words Life Quality, Health, Enthusiasm, Equilibrium and Vigor were repeated several times and by different participants, as can be observed in the graph below:

Word Association



Question number three asked whether practicing sports, from to a theological standpoint, is considered a sin. Eight said no. According to their explanations, sports, when practiced correctly, provide benefits in terms of health and enthusiasm and they help avoid various diseases and sedentary habits, and are thus beneficial for the body and mind. Sports are an activity common to man and are very good for our health, appropriate to our needs, as is evidenced by a biblical verse that was mentioned in which Paul the apostle writes to a young Presbyter, Timothy (in 1 Timothy 4:8), stating, “For bodily exercise is of little profit: but godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.” Thus, physical exercise has its importance for the body. Nonetheless, one of the answers states that this depends on the sport, since some sports are not highly regarded.

The fourth question asked the participants whether they practice some sport. Five said no; among their explanations is the fact that they had previously participated in championships, but are currently inactive. Four practice sports, identifying with hiking, jogging and muscle building and considering soccer to be the sport they practice the most, and they offered an important explanation for this: “In a world that is so hectic and stressful, exercise is a good way of maintaining balance and physical health.”

Question five made the following query: According to the Holy Scriptures, is there a basis for practicing sports? Three participants didn't know how to answer; two others said that there is a basis, because back in those days there were wars and brave men needed to be prepared to fight, brave men like King David, a great and exemplary warrior. When Apostle Paul wrote to the Greeks, he was dealing with a culture that paid special attention to the body. And, when he transmitted the gospel, it became written that a spiritual life with Christ is more important than sports, but it did not say that there is no benefit in sports because, as a comparison, several allusions are made to Galatians 5:7, which says, “You did run well: who did hinder you, that you should not obey the truth?” In Christ, all are free. Nevertheless, two other participants said that they still had not found a reference.

The sixth question sought to discover the motives for sports not being highly emphasized in this church. One participant was unable to answer, while various others provided answers such as dogmatic traditionalism, lack of dissemination and taboos that need to be broken. Two provided similar answers, namely, “there are many evangelists that get so involved in sports that they forget to attend church.” Two quite interesting answers appeared: one that says that the practice of sports in churches is still a remote concept, since the church is very concerned with the area of social action, helping members of the population, but that social projects could be conducted for young people, with the aim of getting them off the streets and away from drugs. The other answer states that the church of the Assembly of God – Ouro Fino Ministry does not have a sports culture because the time for attending church is limited; contact with biblical knowledge thus becomes scarce and the practice of a transformed life becomes hampered.

In the seventh question, an inquiry was made as to whether there are any difficulties with regard to debating and counseling concerning the sports practices of members of their Ministry. The participants were asked to justify their answers. Eight replied that they have no difficulty in debating this subject because they are tuned into our modern times, having their own opinions and knowing that sports is good for your health, and they thus see no reason for not counseling members about exercising; they know sports are good for the body because they are young people that have already opened their minds to debates and issues. In addition, one participant responded that he would possibly have difficulty, since there is no room for this at the Ouro Fino Ministry.

Question eight asked what advice the participant would give to a member of this Ministry with some type of illness who

had been advised by a doctor to practice some kind of sport or physical activity or who had tried to practice sports of his own free will. Five did not respond and four said they would recommend sports because sports improve one's physical fitness regardless of having an illness or not. Furthermore, one of these answers states that, besides counseling, they would suggest seeking a qualified, knowledgeable professional in order to get the most out of such physical activity.

Question nine dealt with whether the members of this Assembly of God Church would encourage the use of church space, during a idle moments, for developing sports projects. Of the nine participants, eight said they would support and encourage such an initiative for the following reasons: because evangelists need motivation, because practicing group activities is great and because sports activities are very beneficial for young people and children, as long as the sport can be adapted to the space available. However, only one participant gave the following reply: “I don't have enough free time for such practices.”

The tenth question asked whether sports could be used as an instrument for bringing God's Word to society. The majority (five participants) gave explanations with examples of how to take advantage of the benefits of these sports practices – for example, Christian players that travel to other countries and have the opportunity to repeat God's Word. Many do not always have the opportunity to preach it, but through their life witnessing, they show that being a Christian does not mean being constrained, but free, having sports as a means of approaching others and, later, spreading His Word as spiritual nourishment. One of the answers highlights the importance of sports due to their playful aspect, which leads to relaxed, enjoyable moments and provides an excellent atmosphere for making other people's defenses more flexible, an atmosphere in which God's Word could be preached. In contrast, two participants said “maybe,” without explaining why; one said it would be possible if done very sensibly.

Question eleven sought to discover whether the participants would be interested in organizing sports projects for their church. The participants were divided: four said they would be interested, offering opinions about several types of sports. These sports modes include fitness centers for staying in shape (due to the many elderly members that need such activities) and soccer games for the many young people that need to do something with their free time. Soccer was highlighted as an example. Among the responses, one includes an observation with regard to this question: “Do you know anyone that would like to help organize a church project with karate and judo classes for kids between four and ten years of age and with project participation conditioned on having an average school grade of over eight points?” This participant still has not been able to implement the idea, but is awaiting the right moment. The other five are not interested in setting up a project, but they would participate in one, for several reasons, such as not having anything in mind. One reply states that to develop projects one requires knowledge, a theoretical basis, investments, people and training of those involved.

In the last question, it is observed that Paul the apostle proffered the following words as guidance for the Thessalonian Christians (1 Thessalonians 5:23): “and the very God of peace sanctify you holy: and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.” Although several participants' answers are concise and to the point, others are longer, and all convey the same essence of the Christian faith. The body should be perfectly healthy, because to be saved in Christ, one must take care not only of the soul and the spirit, but also of the physical body. This means being free of all of the world's imperfections and sins, seeking sanctification and awaiting Christ's return, being reserved, separate, for the service of the Lord, always requiring compatible activities and conduct.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

While developing this dissertation, it was observed – by way of bibliographical research and data collection – that sports are strongly associated with the physical body. To some people, making associations with their religious beliefs (even indirectly), sports are not the main factor for humanity's salvation, as we have seen in various biblical passages cited throughout this study. The church's principal objective is to spread God's Word, thus promoting the salvation of all that believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. Crucified for our sins, suffering agony and pain, He made eternal life after death possible for all humanity. Ever since the reference in John 3:16, we can read that “For God so loved the world, that he gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” Nonetheless, several research sources indicate that bodily movements are a human being's means of survival, making it possible for us to develop bodily gestures and movements since the days in our mother's womb. They are thus very important for humanity's survival, providing the development of physical skills for all people and enhancing their hunting, running, climbing, swimming, walking and fighting skills with equilibrium, health, enthusiasm and vitality. Thus, as was observed in the data collected, sports enthusiasts can achieve the Life Quality of those who fought wars, following the example of King David, a man who lived according to God's will, with great physical vigor for battles.

Considering sports a great social phenomenon, although without absolute certainty as to when sports first appeared, it is known that the only way of deducing this is via the first document, dated 1550 B.C., in a painting made by one of the first human civilizations – the Minoan civilization – on the Greek island of Santorini. It thus becomes clear that associating sports directly with evangelical history would be very difficult, and it would require breaking many dogmas and taboos because we do not have exact references as to the dates – not even references in the Holy Scriptures that mention sports as a basic factor for human life, in contrast with the Bible, in which many written references can be found. There are sixty-six books in the Old and New Testaments together, with thirty-nine in the Old Testament and twenty-seven in the New Testament, serving as a basis for human salvation. However, as aforementioned, one cannot reject sports as a means of approaching those who are unable to maintain relations of pacific coexistence in society.

As an example, we have needy communities that are involved in sports projects that are of great benefit for these communities. As mentioned in several of the questions above, sports have a great value for young people who give up using crack and other narcotics during their free time in order to play ball, compete in races or get involved in projects that mix sports with God's Word. One example is the project “Volleyball of the Future,” which uses sports as a powerful tool to prevent violence and provide professional training for future citizens that will use the project as a means of inclusion and active citizenship. In this way, it will offer training for the job market, namely because not all participants become high-performance athletes. Thus, it becomes clear that, in order to use sports as a form of inclusion and evangelization, qualified professionals with knowledge and a theoretic basis in the areas of sports and theology are needed to act as educators.

Sports values can be used together with the beliefs of society and the target public, respecting both, taking advantage of the playful nature attributed to the pleasurable practice of sports and, at the same time, using the Word, which often acts as an incentive. The Word penetrates human lives through listening, believing and practicing, living for Christ and being irreprehensible to sin, keeping oneself free of the imperfections of this world, seeking sanctification and awaiting Christ's return. By way of the faith that nourishes our spirit and soul, we can also take care of our physical body, maintaining our health, enjoying the benefits of sports that offer us better physical fitness in our everyday lives (which are so hectic and stressful) and always distributing our time between work, rest and leisure.

Although the use of sports as a form of achieving well-being is not part of the Christian faith, some people see sports as

a great benefit as a tool of inclusion, since sports, appropriately practiced, can be used as a form of exchange between social classes. Today, we have many Christian athletes that use their personal image as an example for the lives of many children and youths that come to practice sports. In this manner, they seek to transmit the notion that being an evangelist does not mean being uncool (as is spoken nowadays); instead, it means being responsible and making a commitment to athletic activities while not giving up one's beliefs, thus dedicating one's time to both practicing sports and attending church to worship God. In this manner, with good examples and respect for the time allocated between worshipping God and practicing sports as a source of Life Quality for use in the Ministry itself, sports could perhaps become increasingly popular in the evangelical environment in the not-so-distant future. If and when this occurs, evangelists will begin setting aside their sedentary ways and enjoying greater physical vitality. They will be able to accompany evangelization groups, preaching the Word and including people in social projects that lead to humanization, socialization and inclusion, while keeping them away from drugs, reintegrating them into a society that used to judge them and now accepts them, transforming their lives through God's Word and still enjoying the playful nature of sports activities and a perfectly healthy body.

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SPORTS & RELIGION: VALUES ATTRIBUTED BY PASTORS AND WORKERS OF THE ASSEMBLY OF GOD – OURO FINO MINISTRY, RIO DE JANEIRO

ABSTRACT

This paper aims to identify the value of sports in modern society in the present 21st century, by way of the vision and influence of the pastors and workers that are members of the Assembly of God – Ouro Fino Ministry, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Initially, a bibliographical study was conducted, seeking to collect information and data about the theme under discussion. Next, an explorative survey was performed, with nine members of the Ministry, using a questionnaire prepared with open questions containing test words for Word Association. After obtaining this information, a more in-depth study can be developed on how to handle sports together with religion as a means of serving both interests (sports and religion), bringing harmony and benefits to those who are involved in such practices. It is considered possible to mix sports values with the beliefs of society and the target public – respecting both sides while taking advantage of the playful nature attributed to enjoyably practicing a sport – and, at the same time, use the Word of Christ, which often acts as an incentive. The Word penetrates human lives through listening, believing and practicing, living for Christ and being irreprehensible to sin, keeping oneself free of the imperfections of this world, seeking sanctification and awaiting Christ's return. By way of the faith that nourishes our spirit and soul, we can also take care of our physical body, maintaining our health, enjoying the benefits of sports that offer us better physical fitness in our everyday lives (which are so hectic and stressful) and always distributing our time between work, rest and leisure.

KEYWORDS: Sports, Religion, Pastors and Workers.

SPORT ET RELIGION: VALEURS CIBLES POUR LES PASTEURS ET LES TRAVAILLEURS DE L' ASSEMBLEÉ DE DIEU - MINISTÈRE L'OR FIN, RJ

RESUMEN

Cette étude vise à identifier quelle valeur le sport est à la société moderne, dans ce siècle, grâce à la vision et l'influence des ministres et des travailleurs, des membres de l'Assemblée de Dieu - Ministère L'or Fin, RJ. Au départ, nous avons fait une recherche documentaire afin de recueillir des informations et des données sur le sujet. Dans la deuxième étape a été effectué une recherche exploratoire, avec neuf membres du Ministère, à l'aide d'un questionnaire, élaboré avec des questions ouvertes, ainsi que contenant des mots à une association d'idées. Après l'obtention de ces informations ne peut élaborer une étude plus approfondie de la façon de travailler du sport avec la religion comme un moyen de satisfaire les deux parties - religieux et sportif - apportant l'harmonie et les avantages pour que l'utilisation de telles pratiques mentionnées. Considéré comme possible d'utiliser les valeurs du sport avec la conviction de la société et le public cible, en respectant les deux parties, profitant d'enjouement qui est attribué lors de la lecture sport avec plaisir et en même temps, en utilisant la parole du Christ qui agit souvent comme une incitation. C'est ce mot qui pénètre la vie humaine en entendant, croyant et pratiquant, de vivre pour Lui et être irréprochable du péché, se sauver sans la tache de ce monde, cherchant sanctification et en attente de son retour. On croit que cela se produise en croyant qui nourrit notre esprit et notre âme, et peut également prendre soin de nos corps physiques, en gardant notre santé, avec les bienfaits du sport qui nous donne une meilleure condition physique pour une vie si bien remplie et a souligné que nous avons tous jour, mais toujours séparé le temps entre le travail, le repos et les loisirs.

MOTS-CLES: Sport, Religion, les pasteurs et les travailleurs.

DEPORTE Y RELIGION: VALORES ASIGNADOS PARA PASTORES Y TRABAJADORES DE LA ASAMBLEA DE DIOS - MINISTERIO ORO FINO, RJ

RESUME

Este estudio tiene como objetivo identificar cuál es el valor que el deporte ha de la sociedad moderna, en este siglo, a través de la visión y la influencia de los ministros y de los trabajadores, miembros de la Asamblea de Dios - Ministerio Oro Fino, RJ. Inicialmente, hicimos una búsqueda en la literatura con el fin de recopilar información y datos sobre el tema. En la segunda etapa se realizó una investigación exploratoria, con nueve miembros del Ministerio, mediante un cuestionario, elaborado con preguntas abiertas, así como los que contengan palabras de una asociación de ideas. Después de obtener esta información puede elaborar más estudios sobre cómo trabajar el deporte junto con la religión como una forma de satisfacer a ambas partes - religiosas y deportista - trayendo armonía y beneficios para los que el uso de estas prácticas mencionadas. Considerado como posible utilizar los valores del deporte con la creencia de la sociedad y público objetivo, respetando ambas partes, aprovechando la alegría que se asigna cuando se practican deportes de placer y, al mismo tiempo, el uso de la palabra de Cristo que a menudo actúa como un incentivo. Esta es la palabra que penetra en la vida humana por el oír, creer y practicar, para vivir por Él y sin culpa del pecado, salvarse sin la mancha de este mundo, buscando la santificación ya la espera de su regreso. Se cree que eso suceda, creyendo que alimenta nuestro espíritu y el alma, y también puede tomar el cuidado de nuestros cuerpos físicos, manteniendo nuestra salud, con los beneficios del deporte que nos da una mejor condición física para una vida tan ocupada y subrayó que todos hemos día, pero siempre separado del tiempo entre el trabajo, el descanso y la recreación.

PALABRAS-CLAVE: Deporte, Religión, pastores y obreros.

ESPORTE E RELIGIÃO: VALORES ATRIBUÍDOS POR PASTORES E OBREIROS DA ASSEMBLÉIA DE DEUS - MINISTÉRIO OURO FINO, RJ

RESUMO

Este trabalho objetiva-se identificar qual valor o esporte tem para a sociedade moderna, no presente século XXI, mediante a visão e influência dos pastores e obreiros, membros da Assembléia de Deus – Ministério Ouro Fino, RJ. Inicialmente foi feita uma pesquisa bibliográfica, visando colher informações e dados sobre o tema abordado. No segundo momento foi realizada uma pesquisa exploratória, com nove membros do Ministério, utilizando-se de um questionário, elaborado com perguntas abertas, bem como, contendo palavras para uma Associação de Ideias. Após a obtenção dessas informações pode-se elaborar um estudo mais aprofundado de como trabalhar o esporte junto com a religião como um meio de atender ambas as partes - religiosa e desportista -, trazendo harmonia e benefícios para os que se utilizam das tais práticas mencionadas. Considera-se ser possível utilizar os valores do esporte com a crença da sociedade e público alvo, respeitando ambas as partes, tirando o proveito do lúdico que é atribuído ao se praticar algum esporte com prazer e, ao mesmo tempo, utilizando a palavra de Cristo que muitas das vezes age como um incentivo. É essa palavra que penetra na vida do ser humano pelo ouvir, acreditar e praticar, se viver para Ele e ser irrepreensível ao pecado, se guardando sem nenhuma mancha deste mundo, buscando a santificação e aguardando a Sua volta. Acredita-se que isso aconteça através da crença que alimenta nosso espírito e alma, podendo também cuidar do nosso corpo físico, conservando nossa saúde, com os benefícios do esporte que nos dá um melhor condicionamento físico para uma vida tão agitada e estressada que temos todos os dias, mas, sempre separando o tempo entre trabalho, descanso e lazer.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Esporte, Religião, Pastores e Obreiros.